

LOCAL ORDINANCES FOR CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

111.10 RULES OF DECORUM, COURTESY, AND PROPRIETY.

(a) Council has a significant governmental interest to ensure order during its meetings and expects and requires that its guests be respectful and courteous to other guests, City employees, and Council members. Guests also deserve and should expect a courteous, respectful hearing of their comments and concerns regarding matters under Council's jurisdiction. For those reasons, and so that the City's business may be effectively accomplished without disruption, meetings shall be conducted in an orderly, efficient, and dignified manner. Council must therefore insist that all in attendance not disrupt Council, committee, or special meetings by physical actions, excessive noise, or other disruptive or distracting behaviors, as those actions delay-and in some circumstances-cease the legislative process.

(b) Council shall designate a portion of its meeting, Recognition of Visitors, to provide its guests with a venue in which they may be heard in a fair, impartial, and respectful manner, which is open and welcoming to diverse viewpoints, and yet free from disruptions, and impertinent behavior. Therefore, with the exception of the amount of time permitted to speak, and the rule that Recognition of Visitor's is the only portion of Council meetings that a guest may speak, Council shall not limit a guest's message that appears free of impertinence, slander, profanity, obscenity, intimidation, threats of violence, or those spoken words or actions likely to invite a beach of the peace.

(c) In the interest of its guests, City employees, and Council Members, and to help prevent the disruption of its meetings that delay or cease the legislative process, Council rules shall be strictly and equally enforced. The President of Council shall promptly issue a warning to those that violate the Rules of Decorum, Courtesy, and Propriety to cease the disruptive behavior. Because a disruptive individual waives his or her right to remain at a meeting, and to prevent the further delay or cessation of the legislative process, the President of Council shall expel from the meeting those individuals that persist despite the President's warning to cease the disruptive behavior. If the disruptive individual fails to immediately leave the meeting upon the President of Council's demand, the President shall have the individual removed from the Council, Committee of the Whole, or special meeting by a law enforcement officer in the course of enforcing the laws of the State of Ohio. A person who disrupts a Council, Committee of the Whole, or special meeting may be prosecuted for disturbing a lawful meeting, a fourth degree misdemeanor, and obstructing official business, a second degree misdemeanor.

111.11 RECOGNITION OF VISITORS.

(a) Guests of Council meetings are permitted to speak only during the Recognition of Visitors portion of the Council meeting. Guests shall observe the Rules of Decorum, Courtesy, and Propriety described above. See 111.10. There shall be no shouting or other types of disruptive behavior during a Council, Committee of the Whole, or special meeting.

(b) Each speaker should first acknowledge that the speaker has read and understands Council's Rules of Decorum, Courtesy, and Propriety, and Recognition of Visitors. If the speaker does not acknowledge having read and understanding the aforementioned rules, the Director of Law shall provide the individual with the necessary information so that the speaker may conduct itself accordingly during the Recognition of Visitor's portion of the Council meeting. The speaker shall begin by first identifying themselves by name, home address, and stating the subject matter on which he or she intends to speak.

(c) Each speaker's comments are limited to a maximum of five minutes and shall be directed only to the President of Council. There shall be no debate between the speaker and guests, City employees, or Council Members. Other guests, City employees, or Council members shall not interrupt or otherwise engage the speaker during the speaker's five minutes. Only after the speaker has completed speaking and returned to her or his seat may a Council member, or City employee, who is seated at the Council dais, respond to the speaker's comments.

(d) When the speaker's five minutes have expired, as indicated by both an audible alarm and a timer visible to all of those in attendance of the meeting, the speaker shall promptly cease speaking and shall return to his or her seat or shall exit the meeting. Council members and City employees at the dais are available following the meeting if the speaker wishes to continue the speaker's comments. The speaker may also resume at the next Recognition of Visitor portion of a Council meeting.

(e) A speaker that continues beyond the allocated five minutes, and who continues to speak despite receiving notice that the speaker's time limit has expired, disrupts the meeting and waives his or her right to remain. To prevent the disruptive individual's further delay or cessation of the legislative process, the President of Council shall expel from that meeting those that persist despite the President's warning to cease the disruptive behavior. If the disruptive individual fails to immediately leave the meeting upon the President of Council's demand, the President shall have the individual removed from the Council, Committee of the Whole, or special meeting by a law enforcement officer in the course of enforcing the laws of the State of Ohio. A person who disrupts a Council, Committee of the Whole, or special meeting may be prosecuted for disturbing a lawful meeting, a fourth degree misdemeanor, and obstructing official business, a second degree misdemeanor.

(f) Speakers, and all of those in attendance of Council, Committee of the Whole, and special meetings, shall strictly follow all Rules of Decorum, Courtesy, and Propriety, as described above.