

Proposed Amendments to Council Rules – Council Administration Committee January 12, 2021

Goal: To improve the way Council works together as a body, modeling civil discourse for our community, building trust in local government and ensuring meetings are accessible to the public.

Elements:

- Values statement about the importance of civility in public discourse
- List of specific examples
- Process for dealing with incivility between council Members
- Adjust and clarify speaking length times
- Create goal to end meetings by 11 p.m.

Proposed changes:

RULE 3 - Time of Council Meetings

Council shall establish a calendar of the time and place of regular meetings of Ann Arbor City Council by the third regular Council meeting after the general election.

Regular meetings of the Ann Arbor City Council shall be held on the first and third Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m., in the Council Chamber at City Hall, with exceptions as defined below:

- When the first or third Monday is a major holiday, in which case the meeting shall be held the next secular day (Tuesday), or a later day that same week as set by Council.
- When the first or third Monday precedes an election day, in which case it will be held on Thursday of that week.
- When Council Chambers at City Hall are unavailable due to construction or other reasons, Council Meetings shall be re-located to another suitable location.
- For the purpose of this rule, major holiday shall be defined as:
 - any civic holiday observed by the City of Ann Arbor.
- Council shall also avoid scheduling work sessions on major holidays and, when possible, avoid scheduling special sessions on major holidays.

ADD: In order to ensure accessibility of Council Meetings to the general public, Council aims to end meetings no later than 11 p.m.

Council may, by majority vote, adjust the schedule of regular meeting times and places to accommodate special elections, construction, or other external contingencies that were unanticipated when the calendar was initially set.

RULE 5 Setting the Agenda for Action Meetings

5A – Preparation of the Agenda

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The agenda for each Regular Council meeting and Council Work Session shall be prepared by the City Administrator. A resolution approving a contract shall only be included on the agenda if the City Attorney has reviewed the contract and the result of that review is included or with the proposed resolution.

The agenda for Regular Council meetings will be prepared in accordance with the following order of business:

- Call to Order
- Moment of Silence
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Roll Call of Council
- Approval of the Agenda
- Communications from the City Administrator
- Introductions
- Public Commentary - Reserved Time
- Communications from Council
- Communications from the Mayor
- Consent Agenda
- Public Hearings
- Approval of Council Minutes
- Ordinances - Second Reading
- Ordinances - First Reading
- Motions and Resolutions
 - Council Business
 - Boards and Commissions
 - Staff
- Closed session (if applicable)
- Clerk's Report of Communications, Petitions and Referrals
- Communications from the City Attorney
- Public Commentary - General
- Communications from Council
- Adjournment

Council shall strive to discuss complex litigation matters during special sessions.

The agenda for Council Work Sessions will be prepared in accordance with the following order of business:

- Call to Order
- Work Session
- Public Commentary – General (Must begin no later than 8:45 p.m.)
- Council Communication**

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Adjournment

The agenda for Council Special Sessions will be prepared in accordance with the following order of business:

Call to Order

Special Session

Public Commentary – General

Council Communication

Adjournment

5C - Categories

Communications from Council

This place on the agenda is reserved for Council Members to make announcements, request reports and speak on subjects, which they deem important, report out on committees and give notice of future proposed business. The time limit shall be two minutes, one time at the beginning of the meeting and two minutes, one time at the end.

RULE 10 – Council Conduct of Discussion and Debate

Council recognizes its role in modeling and promoting civil discourse in the City of Ann Arbor. A Council that demonstrates professionalism, honesty, and integrity in its statements and actions will inspire public confidence in government and increase the municipal organization's ability to fulfill its mission for the benefit of the community.

- No Member shall speak until recognized for that purpose by the Presiding Officer.
- ~~No Member shall speak until recognized for that purpose by the Chair.~~
- ~~The Member shall confine comments to the question at hand and avoid personal attack.~~
- It is the Members' responsibility to prepare in advance of Council meetings, be familiar with issues on the agenda, and to submit questions to staff or colleagues, if any, before the meeting. It is the Member's responsibility to be fully prepared before the meeting occurs.
- Members shall practice civility and professionalism in discussions and debate. When Members disagree, they shall do so respectfully.
- Members shall limit their discussion and debate to matters that are germane and relevant to the motion on the floor.
- Members shall address remarks to the Presiding Officer, even if rebutting someone else's statements.
- Members shall speak to their own views and motives, if they wish. No Member shall assail, question or impugn the integrity, character, or motives of another Member.
- A Member shall not hold the floor for more than two times on a given question, three minutes the first time, ~~three minutes~~ two minutes the second time, except with the

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concurring vote of 3/4 of the Members present. The time that the Member holds the floor includes Member questions to and answers from staff.

- Any Member may, by 9:30 a.m. the day of a Meeting, flag an agenda item for a Staff introduction, during which introduction Staff may answer written questions delivered prior to the meeting to Staff from such Member (or others). Staff introduction time does not count toward the requesting Member's speaking time.
- A motion to call the previous question (call for cloture) is in order after thirty (30) minutes of discussion on the question. Upon a motion to call the previous question, all discussion is ended, provided that each Member who has not yet held the floor will have an opportunity to do so. A motion to call the previous question shall require a concurring vote of 3/4 of the Members present.
- Electronic communication during Council meetings shall pertain only to City matters.
- During Council meetings, Members shall not send private electronic communication to persons other than City Staff; provided however, that Members may send draft motions, resolutions, and amendments to the City Clerk who will forward them to members of Council. Members shall not respond to Member-distributed draft language via electronic communication. All draft language sent by electronic communication during Council meetings shall be read into the record prior to discussion by Council. Members will not send publicly-accessible electronic communications (e.g. Twitter and FaceBook posts) during meetings.
- Electronic communication sent and received by a Member during a Council meeting shall be included in the minutes of such meeting, provided that the minutes shall not include electronic communication received by a Member that clearly does not relate to the subject matter of the meeting.
- A Member shall not use their personal mobile devices to answer phone calls or send electronic communications, including text messages, while seated at the Council table. Members who have a need to attend to personal business shall step away from the Council table to do so.

Personal Privilege and Character Attacks

If a specific Member's integrity, character, or motives are characterized, assailed, questioned, or impugned by another Member during a Council meeting, the Member can request permission from the Presiding Officer to address the Council on a question of personal privilege. The Member shall be granted permission to address Council for up to two minutes, but the Presiding Officer may call that Member out of order if the Presiding Officer determines no grounds exist for the question of personal privilege.

Redress of Grievances

If a Member's integrity, character, or motives are assailed, questioned, or impugned by another Member, either during a Council meeting or in another public venue, the Member can seek redress through the Administration committee using the process outlined in COUNCIL ETHICS RULE 12 – COUNCIL SELF-GOVERNANCE.