

Urbandale City Council Meetings

Standards of Public Participation

Regular City Council Meetings

Citizen's Forum

The first opportunity for citizen comment is listed on the agenda as "Citizen's Forum". This time is set aside for citizens to address to the City Council on issues not scheduled for a public hearing on the agenda. Anyone wishing to address the City Council is asked to follow these Rules of Decorum:

- Be recognized by the Mayor.
- State their name and address.
- Speak from the podium in a civil, non-argumentative and respectful manner.
- Whenever a group wishes to address the City Council on the same subject, the Mayor may request that a spokesperson be chosen by the group.
- The suggested time limit for comments is 5 minutes, although the limit can vary at the discretion of the Mayor, especially if comments are repetitive.
- Speakers should speak into the microphone and speak clearly and succinctly.
- All remarks should be directed to the City Council as a body rather than to any particular Council member or any member of the staff or audience and should refer to staff by title and/or department.
- If the speaker has documents or papers they wish to share with the City Council that support their comments, they must provide a copy to the City Clerk.
- The Mayor may allow more time for a speaker or make other judgments or limitations about this portion of the agenda, depending upon the circumstances.
- Speakers will refrain from using: profanity; language likely to incite violence or outbursts from the audience; language that is disruptive to the orderly process of the meeting; engaging in conversations with individual council members; making comments of a personal nature regarding others; shouting, yelling or screaming.
- In many cases, the speaker will be directed to meet with staff to resolve the issue or to get their questions answered.
- Other than asking a question to clarify a statement, Council members should refrain from entering into a dialogue with the speaker. This time on the agenda is not intended for a discussion between the City Council and the speaker and should not be used for that purpose.
- Speakers will not continue to address the City Council once they have left the podium and will not engage in conversation with Council members from their seat.
- The Mayor is responsible for maintaining order and decorum and will not allow the speaker to make personal attacks or inflammatory comments and can ask the speaker to be quiet and sit down. If the individual does not comply with the Mayor's request, they may be asked to leave, or if necessary, be escorted from the meeting.
- At all times, the governing principles of the Urbandale Character Counts Statement shall apply.

Public Hearings

From time to time an agenda item will require a public hearing. When an item requires a public hearing by statute, the Mayor will open and facilitate the public hearing. Reasonable limitations on the number of speakers and time allowed to speak may be imposed by the Mayor in order to keep the meeting moving. Public hearings are held to gather data and opinions from the citizenry that facilitate the decision-making by the City Council. The rules of decorum explained in "Public Forum" above also apply to comments for a public hearing. The procedures for public hearings are as follows:

- Each public hearing is introduced by the Mayor
- The Mayor asks for a staff presentation or clarification of the staff report regarding the issues/background of the public hearing topic.
- If dealing with an issue with an applicant, the Mayor may ask for comments from the applicant or other involved parties.
- The Mayor asks if there are any citizens wishing to comment on the item.
- The Mayor will call for a motion and second to close the public hearing.

- Once a motion has been made and seconded, no additional comments will be heard from a citizen and the City Council will vote to close the public hearing.

The agenda item related to the public hearing will then occur and at that time the Council will be able to discuss and vote on the particular agenda item.

The rules for addressing the City Council during a public hearing are:

- The speaker must be recognized by the Mayor.
- The suggested time limit for comments is 5 minutes, although the limit can vary at the discretion of the Mayor.
- At no time will members of the audience be allowed to enter into the City Council discussion from their seats in the audience. If recognized by the Mayor, a citizen may only be allowed to speak at the podium during the City Council discussion if the Mayor believes their comments are germane and necessary or helpful for the City Council to continue their discussion or make their decision.
- Each speaker should only speak once unless clarification is requested by the City Council.
- The rules of decorum explained in "Citizen's Forum" above also apply to comments for a public hearing.

Rules of Decorum for the Audience

Out of respect for the City Council and those addressing the Council meeting attendees (the audience) are asked to follow these Rules of Decorum for the Audience:

- Turn off or silence all cell phones and pagers.
- Refrain from behavior deemed inappropriate and/or disruptive by the Mayor.
- Refrain from private conversations during meetings.
- Should not address Council members in individual conversation or make comment to individual Council members.
- Should come and go as necessary from the meeting space in the least disruptive manner as possible.
- No campaign placards, banners or signs will be permitted in the City Council Chambers.