

PUBLIC MEETING/SPEAKER GUIDELINES

SPEAKER REGISTRATION

CITY OF DALLAS
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**CITY OF DALLAS
CITY SECRETARY’S OFFICE
PUBLIC MEETING/SPEAKER GUIDELINES**

Residents and other visitors are welcome to attend all public meetings of the city council and will be admitted to the city council chamber or other room in which the city council is meeting up to the fire safety capacity of the room. [CCR 3.3(a)]

Residents or other visitors attending city council meetings shall not bring food or drink into the city council chamber or into any other room in which the city council is meeting. [CCR 3.3(f)]

Enforcement. The city manager, as chief law enforcement officer, shall act as sergeant-at-arms for the city council and shall furnish whatever assistance is needed to enforce the rules of the city council. [CCR 3.4]

SECTION 1 - REQUIRED REGISTRATION INFORMATION

- 1.1. A person wishing to address the city council must first register with the City Secretary’s Office (SEC) and provide the following information [CCR 6.3(a)]:
 - Name
 - Residence address
 - Daytime telephone number
 - Subject matter to be presented and whether the subject is on the current city council meeting agenda.
- 1.2. No person may register to speak during an open microphone period more than once within any 30-day period. [CCR 6.3(f)(4)]
- 1.3. SEC verifies above-noted information as well as previous registration records.

SECTION 2 - ADDITIONAL REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Registrants will be asked to answer the following additional questions:

- 2.1. Will a translator be needed?
 - If yes, SEC will plan to have a translator available at the meeting.
 - If no, translation services will not be scheduled for the meeting. Staff is available if notice is not given, which normally occurs during public hearings as pre-registration for those items is not required.
 - Whenever it is necessary for a speaker to use an interpreter to translate their comments to the city council, the time required for the translation will not be counted against the designated time allotted for the speaker to address the city council. [CCR 6.3(c)(7)]

Note: Registrants may bring their own translator. However, because there is no pooling of speakers allowed, SEC should be notified in advance to allow two speakers at the podium at any given time.

2.2. If registration for “begin” or “end of meeting?”

- Individuals will be asked and/or must indicate if they wish to speak at the begin or end of voting agenda meetings. If no indication is given to begin/end of meeting speaking preference, individuals will be registered for the end of meeting session.

Note: City Secretary’s Office does not coordinate/make reservations for parking request for any meetings. If registering for Briefings, registrants need to plan to be at the meeting at its scheduled start time. Periodically, business has concluded before 12 noon. Once all business has been considered, registrants scheduled are called to speak.

2.3. If registration is for a zoning public hearing, indicate if you are “for” or “against” the City Plan Commission’s (CPC) recommendation.

- The registrant’s position on the matter (for/against) applies only to zoning public hearings.
- Those individuals registered to speak will be called first. After all registered speakers have addressed the city council, other general speakers (from the audience) are given the opportunity to speak. Those speaking in opposition to the City Plan Commission recommendation are generally called first before those in favor.
- A person who addresses the city council during a public hearing must limit remarks to the specific subject matter being considered by the city council at that public hearing.

Note: For miscellaneous hearings, inquiries are not made as to a registrant’s position on the agenda item.

SECTION 3 - REGISTRATION PERIOD

3.1. The earliest a person may register to speak is 8:15 a.m. of the next regular business day following the previous meeting. The deadline for registering is 5:00 p.m. on the last regular business day preceding the meeting for which registration is sought. [CCR 6.3(a)]

3.2. Individuals must register themselves; in-office registration of others is not permitted. However, registration of others is accepted via email but only if individuals for whom registration is being made are cc: [copied] in the email. (Note: Registration is not required for a public hearing, but an individual may register for these items if desired; the same rules apply.)

Note: Except for speaking during public hearing items, individuals who have addressed the city council in any of the Open Microphone categories are required to wait 30 days to address the city council again on any issue on the agenda or during the Open Microphone categories.

3.3. There will be no substitutions or pooling of speakers. [CCR 6.3(c)(2)]

3.4. Registration Options (Monday-Friday, 8:15 a.m. – 5:15 p.m., 214-670-3738)

3.4.A. Walk-in (City Secretary’s Office, Dallas City Hall, Room 5DS)

1) Registrants must complete a Public Meeting/Speakers Card (card).

- a) Registrants will be asked and/or must indicate if registering for the begin or end of a voting agenda meeting. If no indication given, individuals will be registered for the end of meeting session.

3.4.B. Telephone (214) 670-3738

- 1) SEC staff will complete a card for everyone who registers by this method.
 - a) Individuals will be asked and/or must indicate if they wish to speak at the begin or end of a voting agenda meeting. If no indication is given to begin/end of meeting speaking preference, individuals will be registered for the end of meeting session.
 - b) Requests received via voicemail outside of business hours, but during the registration period, will be considered received at the time the voicemail was left. Registration will be in the date/time order the voicemail was left.
 - c) Registration requests left on voicemail or received via email that are before the 8:15 a.m. registration start time as noted in this section will be considered received at the time the voicemail or email was accessed by SEC. A card for voicemails will be “time-stamped” and edited to reflect the date/time the message was left and accessed.

Note: If, within the voice mail, no indication is given as to begin/end of meeting speaking preference, registration will be for the end of meeting session.

3.4.C. Email (citysecretary@dallascityhall.com)

- 1) SEC staff will complete a card for everyone using this method.
 - a) Registrants will be asked and/or must indicate if they wish to speak in the begin or end of meeting. If no indication is given, registration will be for the end of meeting session.
- 2) Requests received outside of business hours, but during the registration period, will be considered received at the time indicated on the email. Registration will be in date/time order the email was received.
 - a) The card will be “time-stamped” and edited to reflect the date/time the email was received.
 - b) If no indication is given as to begin/end of meeting speaking preference, registration will be for the end of meeting session.

3.4.D. Online <https://dallascityhall.com/government/citysecretary/Pages/CCrules.aspx>

- 3) SEC staff will complete a card for everyone using this method.
 - b) Registrants will be asked and/or must indicate if they wish to speak in the begin or end of meeting. If no indication is given, registration will be for the end of meeting session.
- 4) Requests received outside of business hours, but during the registration period, will be considered received at the time indicated on the email. Registration will be in date/time order the email was received.
 - c) The card will be “time-stamped” and edited to reflect the date/time the email was received.
 - d) If no indication is given as to begin/end of meeting speaking preference, registration will be for the end of meeting session.

3.5. Registrants will be listed under the requested category in the order registration was received. [CCR 6.3(c)(6)]

However, registrants will be listed based on the following order:

- a) Dallas residents, with verifiable residential address
- b) Dallas addresses found to be a business address

- c) Non-Dallas residents with other City or State addresses
- d) P.O. Boxes and No addresses, as they do not allow verification of residency and/or city council district.
- e) If at the time of registration, a Dallas registrant requests placement after any of the above-noted order, the request will be honored.

Note: No further follow up with the individual occurs unless one of the details outlined in the required information section was not provided.

- 3.6. Speakers may verify where they appear on the Speakers List by contacting SEC between the hours of 8:15 a.m. - 5:15 p.m. the Tuesday preceding the applicable city council meeting under which registration was made. List will also be made available online at <https://dallascityhall.com/government/citysecretary/Pages/CCrules.aspx>.

Note: Speakers List, because not finalized until after 5:15 p.m., is subject to change.

SECTION 4 - REGISTRANT SUBJECT MATTER OF DISCUSSION

SEC reserves the right to and will summarize any subject for the following reasons:

- 4.1. Subject is considered lengthy
 - Although the subject may have been summarized, the speaker still has the ability to elaborate in as much detail as desired at the time the city council is being addressed.
- 4.2. Remove any reference to the following:
 - A person's name
 - Impertinent, profane, inappropriate or slanderous language
- 4.3. Manager May Contact Speaker. The city manager may direct a member of the city staff to contact the person in an attempt to try and resolve a problem. Contact by a member of the city staff should in no way suggest that the person should not appear and address the city council. [CCR 6.3(b)]

SECTION 5 – HANDOUTS

- 5.1. Individuals who registered to speak can distribute handouts. Speakers are requested to provide 18 copies to the City Secretary's Office (prior to the meeting) or to the security guard (prior to speaking).
 - 5.1.A. Speakers may file copies of their remarks or supporting information with the city secretary. The city secretary will make the information available to the city council and city manager if requested. [CCR 6.3(c)(4)]
 - 5.1.B. When possible, handouts should be provided to the City Secretary's Office by 3:00 p.m. on the business day preceding the meeting in which the individual speaker is registered to speak. In this instance, the handouts will be provided to the city council at the onset of the meeting. Otherwise, handouts should be given to the security officer prior to the start of the meeting, agenda item, or the speaker being called to the podium.

Note: Handing out material at the time of the meeting, after the speaker is called, will affect a speaker's allotted time (typically 3 minutes).

- 5.2. **Speakers with audio/video presentations are encouraged to contact Public Affairs & Outreach at (214) 670-1897 or email at pao@dallascityhall.com no later than one business day before the city council meeting to schedule a time to check their equipment for technical compatibility with the City’s equipment. If a technical problem is discovered during the meeting with staff, staff will make every reasonable effort to work with the speaker to resolve the particular issue. During the city council meeting, audio/video presentation set up and technical problems shall count against a speaker’s allotted time.**

Note: Video or PowerPoint presentation set up affects the allotted time given to any registered speaker.

- 5.3. **No placards, banners, or signs will be permitted in the city council chamber or in any other room in which the city council is meeting. Exhibits, displays, and visual aids used in connection with presentations to the city council, however, are permitted. [CCR 3.3(e)]**
- 5.4. **Video presentations requested by the public as visual aids will not be broadcast over cable television. [CCR 3.3(e)]**

SECTION 6 - ADDRESSING THE CITY COUNCIL

The following are the requirements at the time a speaker is at the podium:

- 6.1. **States name/address for the record. This allows city staff the opportunity to do follow up contact if needed and verifies the registrant’s preferred contact information.**
- 6.2. **Address comments to the presiding officer rather than individual city council members or staff. Speakers may not refer to a city council member by name. [CCR 6.3(c)(3)]**
- 6.3. **Observe the same rules of propriety, decorum, and good conduct applicable to members of the city council. [CCR 3.3(c)]**
- 6.4. **Making personal, impertinent, profane, or slanderous remarks or becoming boisterous while addressing the city council will result in removal from the room for the remaining session of the meeting and the person shall be barred from further audience before the city council during that session. [CCR 3.3(c)]**
- 6.5. **Only one person may approach the microphone at any one time, and only that person at the microphone will be allowed to speak. [CCR 6.3(c)(1)]**
- 6.6. **During designated speaker times, city council members may ask factual questions or make a brief acknowledgement of speakers. Speakers will have one minute to respond. More time may be granted to the speaker for a response at the discretion of the mayor or by a non-debatable motion approved by the city council. Councilmembers will refrain from debate on any item during time allotted to speakers unless a specific time is granted by the mayor or by a non-debatable motion approved by city council. [CCR 6.3(g)]**
- 6.7. **Unauthorized remarks from the audience, stamping of feet, whistles, yells, and similar demonstrations shall not be permitted; those offenders may be removed from the room. Aggravated cases shall be prosecuted on appropriate complaint signed by the presiding officer. [CCR 3.3(d)]**

SECTION 7 – REGISTRATION CATEGORIES

All registrants are encouraged to cancel if unable to attend the meeting for which they have registered. A person who registers to speak but who fails to speak/show when called upon will be deemed as a no show. Under these circumstances, registration will not be permitted until 30 days have lapsed from the date the registration failed to speak when called.

7.1. Open Microphone

These categories provide for the address of concerns/issues that are not matters of consideration listed on a posted meeting agenda. [CCR 6.3(f)]

No person may register to speak during an open microphone period more than once within any 30-day period. [CCR 6.3(f)(4)]

7.1.A. Begin – Open Microphone

Five (5) speakers may speak on any matter, including an agenda item, during an open microphone period at the beginning of each city council meeting. These first five speakers will be called in order in which they registered to speak. Whenever a person fails to speak when called, the name of the next speaker registered for the initial open microphone period will be called, until either five have spoken or all of the names have been called. A speaker, who fails to speak/show when called upon will be deemed as a no show. All remaining speakers not heard earlier in the meeting will be called after the city council has concluded its agenda. [CCR 6.3(f)(1)]

- a) Only five (5) individuals will be signed up to speak during the “Begin – Open Microphone” category. All remaining registrations past the allowable first five (5) speakers will be listed under the “Additional – Open Microphone” category.
- b) Each speaker may speak only once, and the length of time a person will be allowed to speak during the open microphone period is three minutes. If a large number of speakers register for the open microphone period, however, the mayor may, with the concurrence of a majority of the city council, impose more restrictive time limits in order to allow the maximum number of persons to speak [CCR 6.3(f)(2)].
- c) If no category is specified at time of registration, individuals will be registered as “End – Open Microphone” speaker.

7.1.B. Additional – Open Microphone

The wait list for the Begin – Open Microphone category for those who requested to speak during begin session but were not the first five (5) registered speakers. This category is not limited to any number of speakers.

- a) The length of any meeting can vary. Thus, there is never any surety concerning when a registrant will be called. Registrants are required to be at the meeting at its scheduled start time.

7.1.C. End – Open Microphone

The period after the city council has concluded its agenda, at which time all speakers not heard earlier in the meeting may speak. Registrants have requested to speak during the afternoon session. This category is not limited to any number of speakers.

- a) The length of any meeting can vary. Thus, there is never any surety concerning when a registrant will be called. There can be a long wait time.

Note: The restrictions/requirements noted under these categories do not apply to any individuals who spoke during any public hearing, regardless of whether they were registered or not registered for those items. Briefing meetings may end before noon. Therefore, regardless of the category under which a speaker has been registered, individuals should be at the meeting at its scheduled start time.

7.2. Agenda Items

Individuals registered to speak on multiple voting agenda items must speak on all items at the time the first item for which the speaker is registered is considered by the city council. [CCR 6.3(d)(1)]

- 1) If registered to speak on both Consent Agenda Items and Individual Items, individuals will be called to speak on the Consent Agenda Item(s) prior to presentation of the Consent Agenda and will be allowed to speak when the Individual item(s) is presented for consideration. This restriction does not apply to registration for public hearings.
- 2) In the event an agenda item is deferred (postponed) in advance or at the time of the meeting, individuals registered to speak on that item will not be heard. SEC will notify affected individuals as soon as the deferral has been approved/posted. However, if the item is un-deferred at the meeting, there is no time to notify the speaker originally signed up on that item.

7.2.A. Public Hearings (Zoning, Miscellaneous)

- 1) Registration is not required for any public hearing. Individuals may register for as many of these items as desired.
- 2) Speaking under this category does not affect registration within the Open Microphone categories.
- 3) Speakers must limit remarks to the specific subject matter being considered by the city council at that public hearing and must stay on that subject throughout their comments. If a speaker does not address the subject matter of the public hearing, the speaker's time at the microphone will be immediately ended. [CCR 6.3(c)(5)]
- 4) For called public hearings concerning applications to change zoning, remove a flood plain designation, change the name of a street, use park land for another purpose, and similar cases, each person who registers will have a maximum of three minutes to speak. [CCR 6.3(d)(3)]

Note: The presiding officer may impose more restrictive time limits to allow the maximum number of persons to speak if there is no objection voiced by the City council.

- 5) For other public hearings, including annexation, benefit assessment, budget, community development block grant, development code amendments, thoroughfare alignment, thoroughfare plan, and other specially-called hearings, each person who registers will have a maximum of three minutes to speak. The mayor may impose more restrictive time limits on public hearings for which a large number of persons register to speak. [CCR 6.3(d)(3)]

Note: The presiding officer may, impose more restrictive time limits to allow the maximum number of persons to speak if there is no objection voiced by the City council.

- 6) A person will not be permitted to address the city council during the consideration of a zoning ordinance placed on the agenda on which a public hearing had been held by the city council if the public hearing was closed. [CCR 6.3(e)]
- 7) Any person have spoken/not spoken during a public hearing that was deferred (held open) to a later date will be allowed to speak on that new public hearing date.
- 8) Individuals are not required to register prior to the meeting to speak during a public hearing.
- 9) The public hearing process allows other speakers to speak after registered speakers have been called.

SECTION 8 – TIME LIMITS

- 8.1. The length of time a person will be allowed to speak on voting items at city council meetings will be determined according by the following rules. [CCR 6.3(d)]

- 8.1.A. A person who registers to speak on a voting item, other than a public hearing, will be called on at the time the item is considered by the city council. Speakers will have a maximum of three minutes to speak regardless of the number of voting items they wish to address. The mayor may determine the order in which speakers are called. The order in which speakers are called is not required to be in the order that items appear on the agenda, nor are all speakers on a particular item required to be called at the same time. If an item is deferred by a procedural motion from a city council agenda, a speaker who signed up to speak on the item may not be heard until the meeting at which the item is actually considered by the city council. [CCR 6.3(d)(1)]

Note: SEC will contact all registered speakers in the event an item is deferred prior to the meeting day.

- 8.1.B. The mayor may impose more restrictive time limits on voting items for which a large number of persons register to speak. [CCR 6.3(d)(2)]

SECTION 9 – GENERAL PUBLIC

- 9.1. Everyone attending the meeting will refrain from private conversations while the city council is in session. [CCR 3.3(b)]

SECTION 10 - OTHER MEETINGS

- 10.1. Registration guidelines are adjusted accordingly based on the special meeting agenda.

**PUBLIC MEETING/SPEAKER GUIDELINES
IN-BRIEF**

Pursuant to City Council Rules of Procedure, Speakers 6.3, in part, at briefing meetings and voting agenda meetings, a person may address the City Council concerning voting items on the agenda or may present a subject for the City Council's consideration during the open microphone periods in accordance with the following rules

- (1) The earliest a citizen may register for an upcoming city council meeting or briefing is 8:15 a.m. of the next regular business day following the previous city council meeting or briefing.
- (2) The deadline for registering to address the city council is 5:00 p.m. on the business day prior to the day of the meeting or briefing.
- (3) No person may be registered to speak during an open microphone period more than once within any 30-day period.
- (4) Any person registered to appear before the City Council during an open microphone period and fails to speak when called upon is deemed to have spoken at the meeting.
- (5) A person registered is encouraged to cancel if unable to attend the meeting for which they have registered; otherwise, the person will be considered a "no show" and unable to speak during the open microphone period for 30 calendar days.
- (6) The average length of time a person will be allowed to speak is three (3) minutes. However, the Mayor may impose more restrictive time limits on items for which a large number of persons are registered to speak.
- (7) Only one person may approach the microphone at any one time and only one person is allowed to speak.
- (8) Substitutions or pooling of speakers are NOT allowed.
- (9) Speakers must address their comments to the presiding officer, not individual council members or staff.
- (10) If there is no appearance of any of the beginning open microphone speakers, the next open microphone speaker registered to follow the first five (5) speakers will be called until five speakers have spoken.
- (11) A person who addresses the City Council during a public hearing must limit remarks to the specific subject matter being considered by the City Council in that public hearing otherwise the speaking time remaining is forfeited.
- (12) City of Dallas citizens will be registered to speak before nonresidents when appearing on an agenda item or during the open microphone period.

A speaker's allotted time begins as soon as the speaker reaches the podium. Attempting to distribute handouts at that time or connecting equipment for presentations will cut into the allotment.

When possible, handouts should be provided to the City Secretary's Office by 3:00 p.m. on the business day preceding the meeting in which the individual speaker is registered to speak. In this instance, the handouts will be provided to the City Council at the onset of the meeting. Otherwise, handouts should be given to the Security Officer prior to the start of the meeting, agenda item, or the speaker being called to the podium.

Speakers with *audio/video presentations* are encouraged to contact the office of Public Affairs & Outreach at (214) 670-1897 or email at pa@dalascityhall.com no later than one business day before the City Council meeting to schedule a time to check their equipment for technical compatibility with the City's equipment. If a technical problem is discovered during the meeting with staff, staff will make every reasonable effort to work with the speaker to resolve the particular issue. During the City Council meeting, audio/video presentation set up and technical problems shall count against a speaker's allotted time.

Voice messages or e-mails are accepted from citizens who wish to register to speak. E-mails or voice messages before 8:15 a.m. or after 5:15 p.m. will automatically be registered to speak during the open microphone period at the end of the meeting if the citizen does not call back during business hours and specify when they wish to speak.

The City of Dallas welcomes any member of the public to comment on issues of interest or concern to them at the begin or end of meeting open microphone periods. Please keep remarks to the specific issue being considered by the City Council, whether an agenda item or public hearing.

The City Council Rules and Procedures can be accessed online at: http://citysecretary2.dalascityhall.com/pdf/City_Council_Rules100819.pdf or by contacting the City Secretary's Office, 1500 Marilla St., Room 5-D-S, Dallas, TX 75201, (214) 670-3738.

NOTES
