



Susan Galeczka, Deputy Clerk
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DATE: July 6, 2006

TO: AIS Committee Members

RE: Review of City Council Rules &
Procedures (LF 2006-0119)

The consensus of the AIS Committee at its March 7, 2006 was to recommend that Council adopt a policy of not reading letters into the record. Based on this consensus and additional comments at the meeting, I have prepared the following suggested changes to the *City Council Rules of Procedure* for your consideration

ARTICLE VIII, SECTION .06 - CITIZENS' RIGHTS - WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:

- (a) Interested parties or their authorized representatives may address the Council in writing through letters or email regarding any matter listed on the Agenda. ~~Copies will be distributed to Council Members by the Clerk's Office~~
 - i.) Communications received prior to a City Council Meeting
 - a. Written communications and emails received by 4:00 PM on the date of a Council Meeting shall be documented with a receipt time and date by the City Clerk and will be copied and provided to City Council as Supplemental Information
 - b. A list of written communications and emails received will be compiled by the Clerk's Office and provided to City Council as Supplemental Information; The list shall contain the name, address and whether the author is for or against the issue to be discussed.
 - c. At the City Council meeting under the respective item, the President of Council or the City Clerk shall read into the record the name and address of the author and whether he/she is for or against the issue being considered.
 - ~~(b)ii.)- Communications received during a City Council Meeting~~
 - a. Any written correspondence or other materials received at a City Council Meeting shall be documented with a receipt time and date by the City Clerk, ~~read into the record and distributed as indicated.~~

b. At the City Council meeting under the respective item, the President of Council or the City Clerk shall read into the record the name and address of the author and whether he/she is for or against the issue.

c. If the Clerk does not receive a copy of the written submittal, it shall not be incorporated as part of the official record.

AIS DRAFT NOTES FROM 3/7/06:

Chairperson Holder opened the floor for discussion regarding the reading of residents' letters into the record at Council meetings. She noted that the City of Troy adds letters from residents to the meeting packets to eliminate being read at council meetings.

The Committee commenced discussion and noted the following concerns:

- * Are emails considered letters or considered closer in nature to telephone calls.*
- * If letters are to be included in the meeting packet, there should be a specified "cut off" date received for the packet.*
- * Reading letters from residents into the record could set a precedence for residents to send letters lieu of attending Council meetings.*
- * If 50 letters are received on a certain topic, it would not be feasible to read all 50 letters into the record, so how would Council make the choice on which letters to read.*
- * If a resident requests to speak at the podium and has three (3) or four (4) letters to read into the record, he/she only has three (3) minutes and they need to be mindful of that rule.*

The Committee offered the following suggestions:

- * Compile a list the letters received for the meeting packet. The Council President could read the list of letters as "communications received from Mr. or Mrs. So-and-So regarding XYZ Subject matter", etc.*
- * All letter received by a specified cut-off date would be distributed by the Clerk's Office and sent to City Council members as in the current process.*
- * The Public Comment section of the agenda is most likely for "oral, in person public comments", rather than the reading of letters into the record.*
- * A sentence could be added to the Public Comment section of the agenda stating something like, "Public Comments are intended to provide an opportunity for residents to speak directly to the members of Council. Letters received by the Clerk's Office will be distributed to the members of Council, but will not be read into the record". Or, "Residents are urged to appear in person to share their public comments or they may communicate with all members of Council, however, letters from residents will not be read into the record".*
- * If a policy of not reading letters is adopted, Council members must be encouraged to adhere to it. The consensus of the Committee was to recommend that Council adopt a policy of not reading letters into the record. If residents are passionate about a particular topic, they will find a way to attend the meeting or find a representative to step to the microphone on their behalf and speak for the three (3) minutes allowed.*