



## Takoma Park City Council Meeting – January 17, 2018 Agenda Item 6

### **Work Session**

Review of Council Procedures

### **Recommended Council Action**

Review and discuss any needed revisions in preparation for adoption on January 24.

### **Context with Key Issues**

The Council adopts rules of procedure to enable meetings to run smoothly and to make the meeting process transparent for residents. The current rules were last updated 2015.

The procedures address:

- Meeting day and time
- Quorum and voting requirements for adoption of ordinances and resolutions (as determined by the City Charter and Code)
- Order of business for the preliminary part of the meeting
- Description of the process for receiving public comments at meetings and public hearings
- Voting sessions, work sessions, and consent agendas, including how votes to provide direction to the City Manager or to votes to express the will of the Council may be taken outside of a voting session
- Participation and accommodations for individuals with disabilities
- Participation by a Councilmember who cannot be present at a meeting

The procedures document has been reorganized for clarity and revised to reflect current practice.

### **Council Priority**

Engaged, Responsive & Service-oriented Government

### **Environmental Impact of Action**

No environmental impact is anticipated by adoption of the rules of procedure.

### **Fiscal Impact of Action**

Adoption of the procedures is not anticipated to have a fiscal impact.

### **Racial Equity Impact Statement**

We believe revisions to these procedures will not disproportionately impact any particular group.

Providing clear guidelines for public comments at meetings and public hearings ensures that those at a meeting may comment at the appropriate times and that the rules are the same for everyone.

### **Attachments and Links**

- Clean and redlined version of the revised Council Rules of Procedure
- Draft resolution (for adoption on January 24, 2018)

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND  
COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE (REVISED FOR COUNCIL REVIEW)**

- 1) Meeting Day and Time. Regular City Council meetings will commence at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays unless otherwise advertised.
- 2) Quorum. A majority of the Council shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting business except as otherwise provided in the City Charter. A member of the City Council may attend a meeting of the Council (and be present for voting) through electronic communication pursuant to the Special Rules for Electronic Participation (see No. 17).
- 3) Voting. Pursuant to the City Code, the affirmative vote of a majority of Councilmembers present at a meeting shall be required for adoption of an ordinance or resolution. Unless stated otherwise, a majority vote is more than one-half the votes cast by the Councilmembers present at a meeting. There are some circumstances that expressly require a vote by a majority of all members of the Council or a vote of two-thirds of the entire Council. For example, actions involving spending funds that were not appropriated in the budget or spending funds for other than the budgeted purpose require an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the entire Council.
- 4) Preliminary Order of Business. The normal preliminary order of business at regular meetings shall be as follows:
  - Call to Order
  - Roll Call
  - Additional Agenda Items/Agenda Scheduling Update
  - Public Comments
  - For the Record (to include reading of proclamations and presentations)
  - Council Comments
  - City Manager Comments
  - Adoption of Minutes
- 5) Public Comments. Public comments are permitted at the beginning of each regular City Council meeting. Advance sign up is not required unless noted on the agenda. On nights when there are voting items on the agenda, public comments on voting items are called first, followed by general public comments. At their turn, speakers who wish to address the Council should come to the podium and state their name and street for the record.

Comments are limited to three minutes each. If a speaker believes that their public comments need to extend more than three minutes and that the additional information cannot be provided in written form, the commenter should contact the Mayor at least 24 hours before the meeting for permission for an additional one to two minutes. Comments by members of the public that would last more than five minutes may be

allowed in exceptional circumstances, but must be approved by the Mayor and scheduled so that they can be added to the agenda.

To ensure everyone who wants to comment has the time to do so, members of the public are expected to only speak once during general public comments. Commenters may not cede their time to others.

The showing of videos or a power point by members of the public requires permission of the Mayor at least 24 hours before a meeting. The digital file must be emailed to the City Clerk no later than noon the day of the Council meeting. Flash drives (thumb drives) are not permitted for use at the meeting.

During public comment, Councilmembers shall limit their questions to asking the speaker for information or providing them with information. All those present at Council meetings shall permit speakers to express their opinions without interruption.

Meetings outside of regular meetings of the Council may not have time allotted for public comment, or in some instances, may require sign up ahead of time.

- 6) Public Hearings. The Council may hold scheduled public hearings on regular meeting nights or at another time in order to accept public comment on an issue. On a regular meeting night, public hearings are generally scheduled before other public comments.

Public hearings may be more structured than other public comment periods. Speakers are asked to sign up to speak at the meeting. When a large number of people are expected to address the Council on an issue, speakers may be asked to sign up in advance of the meeting. Comments will be limited to three minutes each. After everyone has had an opportunity to speak, speakers may be given the opportunity to add additional comments, at the discretion of the Mayor.

- 7) Written Testimony. If someone is unable to attend a meeting or public hearing but wishes to submit testimony in writing, it should be submitted to the City Clerk. Written testimony will be copied to the Council and included in the official record of the meeting or hearing.

- 8) Announcement by Councilmembers of Proposed Introduction of Ordinances or Resolutions. When a member of the City Council wishes to publicly announce the proposed introduction of an ordinance or resolution for consideration at a future meeting, the Councilmember may announce it during Council Comments. The Councilmember may then request that the Mayor schedule a work session to discuss the item or request that the Mayor schedule the ordinance or resolution for a vote at a future legislative meeting. However, this is not intended to supersede the Mayor's authority to set the agenda pursuant to Section 303(b) of the City Charter.

- 9) Following the preliminary order of business at a meeting, each agenda item will be

taken up. The Mayor, a Councilmember, or a City employee generally summarizes the content of the agenda item and states the action the Council is considering.

- 10) Voting Sessions. At voting sessions, the Council votes on ordinances and resolutions after they are moved and duly seconded. With the exception of consent agenda items, any time the Council votes on legislation there is time for Council discussion before the vote.

Councilmembers are encouraged to provide text of proposed amendments in writing in advance of the meeting or at the meeting, and to work with City staff before Council meetings to make editorial changes to ordinances or resolutions. During Council meetings, Councilmembers shall keep editorial changes to a minimum.

For all but very routine items, work sessions are often scheduled at a meeting at least one week before an ordinance or resolution is to be voted on. This enables the public to hear a discussion and learn about an issue before commenting on a voting item.

- 11) Consent Agendas. At the discretion of the Mayor, resolutions or single reading ordinances may be passed as part of a consent agenda without Council comment or discussion. At the request of any Councilmember, an item on the consent agenda shall be removed from the consent agenda and placed on the regular agenda for that meeting.
- 12) Work Sessions. At work sessions, the Council discusses issues that may become future legislation, but does not vote on legislation. A special session for voting on legislation may be added after the work session if the legislation is time-sensitive. Work sessions allow members of the Council to discuss issues among themselves and with City staff. Members of the public are not permitted to speak during work sessions, unless invited to do so during the work session by the Mayor or by prior arrangement with their Councilmember. Comments on work session topics are welcome during the public comment period.
- 13) Motions or Hand Votes Outside of Voting Sessions. During any meeting or work sessions at which a quorum is present, the Mayor may call for hand votes or motions may be made by Councilmembers: a) to request the Mayor to schedule an item on a future agenda; b) to make requests of or clearly articulate direction being provided to the City Manager; or c) to clarify whether the Council wishes to move forward with an issue under discussion. After discussion of a motion that has been made and duly seconded, the Council may vote on the matter.
- 14) Video Recording. Council meetings will ordinarily be recorded by City TV. These recordings may become part of the permanent record of Council proceedings. Meetings will be simultaneously cablecast on the Takoma Park cable channel and streamed and archived online. Copies are available upon request from City TV if costs are paid by the recipient.

15) ADA Notice. The City of Takoma Park is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities are able to fully participate in public meetings. Anyone with a disability who 1) wishes to receive auxiliary aids, services, or accommodations at a City of Takoma Park public meeting or public hearing; or 2) cannot attend a public meeting but would like to record an audio comment to be played during the public comment period of the meeting, is invited to contact Jason Damweber, Deputy City Manager, at [jasond@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:jasond@takomaparkmd.gov) or 301-891-7202 at least 48 hours in advance.

16) Special Rules for Electronic Participation by Members of the City Council. A member of the City Council may attend a meeting of the Council through electronic communication as follows.

A) Prior to the Meeting:

The Councilmember shall give notice to the Mayor and City Clerk of his/her desire to attend a meeting from a remote location and indicate from where the member will participate. Notice should be provided one week in advance when practicable.

Upon receipt of notice, the City Clerk will confirm that the City TV staff is able to manage the request. Once confirmation has been received, the City Clerk will note the remote participation on the City Council agenda.

Emergency requests due to illness, unexpected travel for work, or similar unforeseen circumstances will be accommodated when possible.

B) During the Meeting:

The Mayor will announce the member's remote participation at the beginning of the meeting.

During roll call, the Councilmember shall respond that he or she is present.

If the Councilmember leaves the meeting, he or she shall announce the departure unless the meeting has been paused for a break or has been adjourned. After a break, the Mayor will confirm that the Councilmember is still present at the meeting.

The Councilmember attending electronically shall ask for recognition from the Mayor if he or she desires to speak.

When a Councilmember is attending electronically, all votes taken during the meeting shall be by roll call. The vote of the remote participant must be audible.

C) Limitations:

Remote participation will be limited by the technology available. No more than one member may participate remotely in a meeting unless a second member is needed in order to achieve a quorum. Requests shall be accommodated in the order that they are received.

If the remote connection fails or the participating member cannot hear the proceedings or be heard by all those present, the Councilmember shall depart the meeting until the connection can be properly restored. In this event, the Mayor will announce the departure and, when applicable, subsequent rejoining at the meeting.

Electronic participation is always contingent upon the ability of staff to make arrangements for the voice of the remote participant to be heard by all persons at the meeting and for the remote participant to hear all Councilmembers in attendance.

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND**  
**COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE (REVISED FOR COUNCIL REVIEW)**  
~~(Adopted December 7, 2015 by Resolution 2015-67)~~

- 1) Meeting Day and Time. Regular City Council meetings ~~and work sessions~~ will commence at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays unless otherwise advertised.
- 2) Quorum. A majority of the Council shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting business except as otherwise provided in the City Charter. A member of the City Council may attend a meeting of the Council (and be present for voting) through electronic communication pursuant to the Special Rules for Electronic Participation (see No. xx)
- 3) Voting. Pursuant to the City Code, the affirmative vote of a majority of Councilmembers present at a meeting shall be required for adoption of an ordinance or resolution. Unless stated otherwise, a majority vote is more than one-half the votes cast by the Councilmembers present at a meeting. There are some circumstances that expressly require a vote by a majority of all members of the Council or a vote of ~~two-thirds~~2/3 of the entire Council. For example, actions involving spending funds that were not appropriated in the budget or spending funds for other than the budgeted purpose require an affirmative vote of ~~2/3~~two-thirds of the entire Council.
- 4) ~~A member of the City Council may attend a meeting of the Council (and be present for voting) through electronic communication pursuant to the Special Rules for Electronic Participation (No. 16, below).~~
- 4)5) Preliminary Order of Business. The normal preliminary order of business at regular meetings shall be as follows:
  - Call to Order
  - Roll Call
  - Additional Agenda Items/Agenda Scheduling Update
  - Public Comments
  - For the Record (to include reading of proclamations and presentations) ~~the opportunity for Councilmembers to announce introduction of legislation)~~
  - Council Comments
  - City Manager's Comments
  - Adoption of Minutes
- 5)6) Public Comments. Public comments are permitted at the beginning of each regular City Council meeting. Advance sign up is not required unless noted on the agenda. On nights when there are voting items on the agenda, public comments on voting items are called first, followed by general public comments. At their turn, sSpeakers who wish to address the Council ~~should~~shall come to the podium, and state their name and street for the record.



Comments are limited to three minutes each. If a speaker believes that their public comments need to extend more than three minutes and that the additional information material cannot be provided in written form, the commenter should please contact the Mayor at least 24 hours before the meeting for permission for an additional one to two minutes. Comments by members of the public that would last more than five minutes may be allowed in exceptional circumstances, but must be approved by the Mayor and scheduled ~~with the Mayor or City Clerk~~ so that they can be added to the agenda.

To ensure everyone who wants to comment has the time to do so, members of the public are expected to only speak once during general public comments. Commenters may not cede their time to others.

The showing of videos or a power point by members of the public requires permission of the Mayor at least 24 hours before a meeting. The digital file must be emailed to the City Clerk no later than noon the day of the Council meeting. Flash drives (thumb drives) are not permitted for use at the meeting.

During public comment, Councilmembers shall limit their questions to asking the speaker for information or providing them with information. All those present at Council meetings shall permit speakers to express their opinions without interruption.

Meetings outside of regular meetings of the Council may not have time allotted for public comment, or in some instances, may require sign up ahead of time.

6) Public Hearings. The Council may hold scheduled public hearings on regular meeting nights or at another time in order to accept public comment on an issue. On a regular meeting night, public hearings are generally scheduled before other public comments.

Public hearings may be more structured than other public comment periods. Speakers are asked to sign up to speak at the meeting. When a large number of people are expected to address the Council on an issue, speakers may be asked to sign up in advance of the meeting. Comments will be limited to three minutes each. After everyone has had an opportunity to speak, speakers may be given the opportunity to add additional comments, at the discretion of the Mayor.

7) Written Testimony. If someone is unable to attend a meeting or public hearing but wishes to submit testimony in writing, it should be submitted to the City Clerk. Written testimony will be copied to the Council and included in the official record of the meeting or hearing.

87) Announcement by Councilmembers of Proposed Introduction of Ordinances or Resolutions. When a member of the City Council wishes to publicly announce the

proposed introduction of an ordinance or resolution for consideration at a future meeting, the Councilmember may announce it during Council ~~for the record after public~~ Comments. The Councilmember may then request that the Mayor schedule a work session to discuss the item or request that the Mayor schedule the ordinance or resolution for a vote at a future legislative meeting. However, this is not intended to supersede the Mayor's authority to set the agenda pursuant to Section 303(b) of the City Charter.

98) Following the preliminary order of business at a meeting, each agenda item will be taken up. The Mayor, a Councilmember, or a City employee generally summarizes the content of the agenda item and states the action the Council is considering.

109) Voting Sessions. ~~There are two kinds of Council meetings: legislative sessions and work sessions. Legislative sessions are generally held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month.~~ At voting legislative sessions, the Council votes on ordinances and resolutions after they are moved and duly seconded. With the exception of consent agenda items, any time the Council votes on legislation there is time for Council discussion before ~~followed by~~ the vote~~—~~.

Councilmembers are encouraged to provide text of proposed amendments in writing in advance of the meeting or at the meeting, and to work with City staff before Council meetings to make editorial changes to ordinances or resolutions. During Council meetings, Councilmembers shall keep editorial changes to a minimum.

1140) For all but very routine items, work sessions are often scheduled at a meeting at least one week before an ordinance or resolution is to be voted on. This enables the public to hear a discussion and learn about an issue before commenting on a voting item.

1244) Consent Agendas. At the discretion of the Mayor, resolutions or single reading ordinances may be passed as part of a consent agenda without Council comment or discussion. At the request of any Councilmember, ~~wishes to discuss~~ an item on the consent agenda, ~~that item~~ shall be removed from the consent agenda and placed on the regular agenda for that meeting.

1312) Work Sessions: At work sessions, ~~which are usually held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month or after legislative sessions on other meeting nights,~~ the Council discusses issues that may become future legislation, but does not vote on legislation. A special session for voting on legislation may be added after the work session if the legislation is time-sensitive. Work sessions allow members of the Council to discuss issues among themselves and with City staff. Members of the public are not permitted to speak during work sessions, unless invited to do so during the work session by the Mayor or by prior arrangement with their Councilmember. Comments on work session topics are welcome during the public comment period.

1413) Motions or Hand Votes Outside of Voting Sessions. During any meeting or work sessions

at which a quorum is present, the Mayor may call for hand votes or motions may be made by Councilmembers: a) to request the Mayor to schedule an item on a future agenda; b) to make requests of or clearly articulate direction being provided to the City Manager; or c) to clarify whether the Council wishes to move forward with an issue under discussion. After discussion of a motion that has been made and duly seconded, the Council may vote on the matter.

- ~~14) The Council may hold public hearings, which generally occur near the beginning of a meeting, in order to accept public comment on an issue. Public hearings may be more structured than other public comment periods in order to accommodate all persons who wish to speak. When a large number of people wish to address the Council on an issue, speakers may be asked to sign up to speak. Comments will be limited to three minutes. After everyone has had an opportunity to speak, speakers may be given the opportunity to add additional comments, at the discretion of the Mayor.~~

~~If someone is unable to attend a public hearing but wishes to submit testimony in writing, it can be emailed, mailed or faxed to the City Clerk. Written testimony will be copied to the Council and included in the official record of the hearing.~~

- ~~15156) Council meetings will ordinarily be recorded by City TV. These Electronic recordings may become of meetings are part of the permanent record of Council proceedings. Meetings ~~and work sessions~~ will be simultaneously cablecast on the Takoma Park cable channel and streamed and archived online. A copy of the recording will be available for one year for the public to check out from the Takoma Park Library Copies are also available upon request from City TV if costs are paid ~~for~~ by the recipient.~~

- 1617) ADA Notice. The City of Takoma Park is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities are able to fully participate in public meetings. Anyone with a disability who 1) wishes to receive auxiliary aids, services, or accommodations at a City of Takoma Park public meeting or public hearing; or 2) cannot attend a public meeting but would like to record an audio comment to be played during the public comment period of the meeting, is invited to contact Jason Damweber, Deputy City Manager, at [jasond@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:jasond@takomaparkmd.gov) or 301-891-7202 at least 48 hours in advance.

- 1786) Special Rules for Electronic Participation by Members of the City Council

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Electronic participation is always contingent upon the ability of staff to make arrangements for the voice of the remote participant to be heard by all persons at the meeting and for the remote participant to hear all Councilmembers in attendance.

Introduced by:

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND**

**RESOLUTION  
ADOPTING COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE**

WHEREAS, the City Council's general operating rules and procedures are governed by the City Charter and Code; and

WHEREAS, the Council may adopt supplemental rules and procedures by ordinance or resolution; and

WHEREAS, Robert's Rules of Order is the recognized authority as to any matter or procedure not covered elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, the City Council periodically reviews and updates its Rules of Procedure; and

WHEREAS, the last update was completed in December 2015 by Resolution 2015-67.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND, that the attached Council Rules of Procedure dated \_\_\_\_\_ are hereby adopted.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2015.

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jessie Carpenter, CMC  
City Clerk