

Introduced by: Councilmember Seamens

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

**RESOLUTION-2018-8
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 January 24, 2018 are hereby adopted.

Adopted this 24th day of January, 2018.

Attest:

Jessie Carpenter, CMC
City Clerk

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE [\(REVISED AFTER THE JANUARY 17 WORK SESSION\)](#)

- 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 on Voting Items](#)

[General](#) 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 that 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. However, a speaker representing a committee may speak twice in order to present their personal comment in addition to the position of the committee.~~

~~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.~~

Speakers may not cede their time to others.

During public comments, 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 comments, 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 comments 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) Visual or Audiovisual Materials. Requests to show visual or audiovisual materials during public comments or hearings must be submitted to the Mayor at least 24 hours in advance. If the request is approved, the digital file or link to the file must be emailed to the City Clerk no later than noon the day of the meeting or hearing. Flash drives (thumb drives) are not permitted for use at the meeting.

- 87) Written Materials Testimony. Written comments and testimony are always welcome, either in lieu of or in addition to spoken testimony. The written material should be submitted to the City Clerk (preferably in electronic form). ~~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, and appended to the minutes.

98) 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.

109) Voting Sessions, Consent Agendas, and Work Sessions. 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.

1140) 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.

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, an item on the consent agenda shall be removed from the consent agenda and placed on the regular agenda for that meeting.

1342) 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.

| [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.

| [1514](#)) 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.

| [1615](#)) 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 or 301-891-7202 at least 48 hours in advance.

| [1716](#)) 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.