



TIME LIMITS FOR SPEAKERS AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

PURPOSE

To establish a clear and effective process and prescribed time limits for members of the public to address the City Council during meetings to encourage well-organized and equitable opportunities for all who wish to speak on matters within the jurisdiction of the City Council.

POLICY

Member of the public have the right to address the City Council as a whole in order to speak their opinion regarding issues within the jurisdiction of the City Council at all regular and special Council meetings.

In order to encourage well-organized presentations and to minimize repetitive input, the City Council, through the Mayor/Chair of the meeting, adheres to time limits on the length of public presentations to the City Council.

Members of the Public may address the City Council on any individual item on a set agenda when it pertains to the item itself and also under Public Presentations, a section of the agenda that is reserved for members of the public to address the City Council as a whole on items that have not been agendized.

Members of the public should address their comments to the Mayor/Chairperson of the meeting and not to individual Council Members or City officials.

While the public may speak their opinions on City business, Behavioral Standards for Public Meetings should be followed.

No action shall be taken on an item of business not appearing on the agenda, unless under strict exception where an emergency situation exists; two-thirds vote of the Council present or, if less than two-thirds of the members of the Council are present, a unanimous vote of those members present that the need to take action arose after the agenda was posted; or the item was posted for a prior meeting of the Council occurring not more than five calendar days prior to the date action is taken on the item, and at the prior meeting the item was continued to the meeting at which action is being taken.

When a public presentation is made, the Council or City officials may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed and may request that the City Manager to report back at a subsequent meeting (pursuant

TIME LIMITS FOR SPEAKERS AT COUNCIL MEETINGS (cont.)

to Government Code Sections 54954.2, 54954.3 and 54956.5).

Groups and neighborhoods are encouraged to appoint a single spokesperson to represent a larger group and individual speakers should attempt to present new material and avoid making repetitive comments.

PROCEDURE

1. Public information included on the cover page for the Agenda and the Notice of Procedures (placed in Council Chambers, City Clerk's Office and sent with Public Hearing notices):
 - Explains the time limits set for speakers,
 - Encourages individuals and groups to provide written comments for inclusion in the Council agenda,
 - Encourages groups to appoint a spokesperson,
 - Requests that speakers present new material and avoid repetitive comments.
2. Speakers are encouraged to submit a Speaker Card to the City Clerk.
3. The following time limits will be enforced by the Mayor/Chairperson to ensure equal opportunity and treatment of all speakers:
 - 10 Minutes: Presentation of Applicant/Appellant/Challenged Party
 - 5 Minutes: Presentation of Written Petition
 - 3 Minutes: Public Presentations for items that do not appear on the agenda but are within the jurisdiction of the City Council
 - 2 Minutes: Public Presentations for individual agenda items
 - 1 Minute: requests for Consent Calendar items pulled for discussion

Exceptions: Hearings to revoke licenses or permits conducted pursuant to Article VI ("General Characteristics of License or Permit; Suspension Procedure") of Chapter 2 of the City Code are exempt from the above time limitations. In addition, on all matters the Mayor/Chairperson expressly retains the discretion to limit or extend these time limits when deemed appropriate.

TIME LIMITS FOR SPEAKERS AT COUNCIL MEETINGS (cont.)

4. The City Clerk shall operate the speaker timing/lighting system on the podium. A green light indicating the beginning of the time period will come on as the speaker begins; a yellow light will appear when 30 seconds remain; a red light will come on, accompanied by a buzzer, at the end of the time period. A digital display counts down the available time for the speaker, the public, and Council Members to see. Once the buzzer goes off, the speaker shall immediately complete their final thought and complete their presentation.

RESOLUTION NO. 17-8431

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA
AMENDING THE POLICY ESTABLISHING TIME LIMITS FOR
SPEAKERS AT CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF SANTA CLARA AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, members of the public have the right to address the City Council as a whole in order to speak their opinion regarding issues within the jurisdiction of the City Council at all regular and special Council meetings;

WHEREAS, members of the public may address the City Council on any individual item on a set agenda when it pertains to the item itself and also under Public Presentations, a section of the agenda that is reserved for members of the public to address the City Council as a whole on items that have not been agendized but are within the jurisdiction of the City Council;

WHEREAS, while members of the public may speak their opinions on City business, Behavioral Standards for Public Meetings should be followed; and,

WHEREAS, in an effort to establish clear and effective processes and to encourage well-organized and equitable opportunities for all who wish to address the City Council, the Council has recognized the need to establish set guidelines for speaker time limits.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF SANTA CLARA AS FOLLOWS:

1. Pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.3(b), a policy establishing speaker time limits is hereby adopted as follows:

A. Ten (10) minutes is the time allotted for the comments of the Applicant/Appellant/
Challenged Party:

- i. Public Hearings – the presentation of the applicant;
- ii. Appellant – the presentation of the party who filed the appeal [appealing party] from a City decision;
- iii. Challenged Party – the presentation of the party who previously received

a favorable City decision but whose favorable City decision has been disputed by an appealing party, thereby invoking the appeal proceedings before the City Council.

- B. Five (5) minutes is the time allotted for comments regarding a Written Petition.
- C. Three (3) minutes is the time allotted for Public Presentations for items that do not appear on the agenda and for rebuttal closing statements during a public hearing:
 - i. Input and comments within the jurisdiction of the City Council but not explicitly on the agenda made under the Public Presentations portion of the agenda;
 - ii. Rebuttal (closing statement) of the applicant at public hearings and the rebuttal of the appealing party [and, if applicable, the rebuttal of the challenged party] at appeal hearings. When there is both an appealing party and a challenged party, the appealing party will be entitled to make the final comments.
- D. Two (2) minutes is the time allocated for Public Comment for individual agenda items.
- E. One (1) minute is the time allocated for Public Comment requesting any individual Consent Calendar item be pulled for discussion.
- F. Exceptions to the above time limits include:
 - i. Hearings to revoke licenses or permits conducted pursuant to the City Code, Chapter 2, Article VI ("General Characteristics of License or Permit; Suspension Procedure")
 - ii. On all matters, the Mayor/Chairperson expressly retains the discretion to extend or reduce these time limits when deemed appropriate.


2. Resolution No. 7074 (07/15/03) is hereby repealed in its entirety.

3. Constitutionality, severability. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or word of this resolution is for any reason held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be unconstitutional or invalid for any reason, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of the resolution. The City of Santa Clara, California, hereby declares that it would have passed this resolution and each section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, and word thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more section(s), subsection(s), sentence(s), clause(s), phrase(s), or word(s) be declared invalid.

4. Effective date. This resolution shall become effective immediately.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THE FOREGOING TO BE A TRUE COPY OF A RESOLUTION PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CITY OF SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA, AT A REGULAR MEETING THEREOF HELD ON THE 16th DAY OF MAY 2017, BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:	COUNCILORS:	Davis, Kolstad, Mahan, O'Neill and Watanabe and Mayor Gillmor
NOES:	COUNCILORS:	None
ABSENT:	COUNCILORS:	Caserta
ABSTAINED:	COUNCILORS:	None

ATTEST: 
For ROD DIRIDON, JR.
CITY CLERK
CITY OF SANTA CLARA

Attachments incorporated by reference:

1. Revised Policy and Procedure 029 – Time Limits for Speakers at Council Meetings