

# Special Session

|                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Agenda Item #</b> | 3                              |
| <b>Meeting Date</b>  | December 7, 2015               |
| <b>Prepared By</b>   | Jessie Carpenter<br>City Clerk |
| <b>Reviewed By</b>   | Suzanne Ludlow<br>City Manager |

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Discussion Item</b> | Council Rules of Procedure  |
| <b>Background</b>      | <p>With a newly elected City Council and a change in Mayor, this is an ideal time to revisit, revise, and update the Council’s Rules of Procedure as needed.</p> <p>Beginning in January 2016, the following changes will be made to the format of City Council meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular City Council meetings and work sessions will occur on Wednesdays.</li> <li>• Meetings will begin at 7:30 p.m.</li> </ul> <p>The Council will continue the following practices which have not yet been incorporated into the Council Rules of Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On nights when there are voting items on the agenda, public comments on voting items are called first, followed by general public comments.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to the extra meetings scheduled in April to discuss the budget, the Council will continue the practice of holding additional meetings in January to discuss City priorities and benchmarks to prepare for the budget. Public hearings and other special meetings may be advertised and held at the discretion of the Council. These meetings will be open to the public.</p> <p>Council discussed the rules of procedure and revisions on November 30. A resolution adopting the Rules of Procedure is scheduled for December 7.</p> |
| <b>Policy</b>          | The City Council's general operating rules and procedures are governed by the City Charter and Code, as well as by any supplemental procedures adopted by ordinance or resolution. Robert’s Rules of Order is the recognized authority as to any matter of procedure not covered by the Charter, Code, or adopted rules of procedure.   |
| <b>Fiscal Impact</b>   | N/A   |
| <b>Attachments</b>     | Resolution<br>Revised Council Rules of Procedure  |
| <b>Recommendation</b>  | Adopt Council Rules of Procedure.   |

Introduced by:

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND**

**RESOLUTION 2015-  
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.

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

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

Attest:

---

Jessie Carpenter, CMC  
City Clerk

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND**  
**COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE**  
**(Adopted \_\_\_\_\_ by Resolution 2015-\_\_)**

- 1) Regular City Council meetings and work sessions will commence at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays unless otherwise advertised.
- 2) A majority of the Council shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting business except as otherwise provided in the City Charter.
- 3) 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 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 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).
- 5) 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 the opportunity for Councilmembers to announce introduction of legislation)
  - Council Comments
  - City Manager's Comments
  - Adoption of Minutes
- 6) Public comments are permitted at the beginning of each meeting. On nights when there are voting items on the agenda, public comments on voting items are called first, followed by general public comments. Speakers who wish to address the Council shall come to the podium, and state their name and street for the record. If a speaker believes that their public comments need to extend more than three minutes and that additional material cannot be provided in written form, please contact the Mayor 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.

46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65  
66  
67  
68  
69  
70  
71  
72  
73  
74  
75  
76  
77  
78  
79  
80  
81  
82  
83  
84  
85  
86  
87  
88  
89  
90

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.

- 7) 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 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.
- 8) Following the preliminary order of business, 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.
- 9) 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 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 followed by the vote. Councilmembers are encouraged 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.
- 10) 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) At the discretion of the Mayor, resolutions or single reading ordinances may be passed as part of a consent agenda. If 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.
- 12) 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.

- 91 13) During any meeting or work sessions at which a quorum is present, motions may be made  
92 by Councilmembers: a) to request the Mayor to schedule an item on a future agenda; b) to  
93 make requests of or clearly articulate direction being provided to the City Manager; or c)  
94 to clarify whether the Council wishes to move forward with an issue under discussion.  
95 After discussion of a motion that has been made and duly seconded, the Council may vote  
96 on the matter.  
97
- 98 14) The Council may hold public hearings, which generally occur near the beginning of a  
99 meeting, in order to accept public comment on an issue. Public hearings may be more  
100 structured than other public comment periods in order to accommodate all persons who  
101 wish to speak. When a large number of people wish to address the Council on an issue,  
102 speakers may be asked to sign up to speak. Comments will be limited to three minutes.  
103 After everyone has had an opportunity to speak, speakers may be given the opportunity to  
104 add additional comments, at the discretion of the Mayor. If someone is unable to attend  
105 a public hearing but wishes to submit testimony in writing, it can be emailed, mailed or  
106 faxed to the City Clerk. Written testimony will be copied to the Council and included in  
107 the official record of the hearing.  
108
- 109 15) Council meetings will ordinarily be recorded by City TV. Electronic recordings of  
110 meetings are part of the permanent record of Council proceedings. Meetings and work  
111 sessions will be simultaneously cablecast on the Takoma Park cable channel and  
112 streamed and archived online. A copy of the recording will be available for one year for  
113 the public to check out from the Takoma Park Library. Copies are also available upon  
114 request from City TV if costs are paid for by the recipient.  
115
- 116 16) **Special Rules for Electronic Participation**  
117
- 118 A member of the City Council may attend a meeting of the Council through electronic  
119 communication as follows.  
120
- 121 **A) Prior to the Meeting:**  
122
- 123 The Councilmember shall give notice to the Mayor and City Clerk of his/her desire to  
124 attend a meeting from a remote location and indicate from where the member will  
125 participate. Notice should be provided one week in advance when practicable.  
126
- 127 Upon receipt of notice, the City Clerk will confirm that the City TV staff is able to  
128 manage the request. Once confirmation has been received, the City Clerk will note the  
129 remote participation on the City Council agenda.  
130
- 131 Emergency requests due to illness, unexpected travel for work, or similar unforeseen  
132 circumstances will be accommodated when possible.  
133

134 **B) During the Meeting:**  
135

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

138  
139 During roll call, the Councilmember shall respond that he or she is present.  
140

141 If the Councilmember leaves the meeting, he or she shall announce the departure unless  
142 the meeting has been paused for a break or has been adjourned. After a break, the Mayor  
143 will confirm that the Councilmember is still present at the meeting.  
144

145 The Councilmember attending electronically shall ask for recognition from the Mayor if  
146 he or she desires to speak.  
147

148 When a Councilmember is attending electronically, all votes taken during the meeting  
149 shall be by roll call. The vote of the remote participant must be audible.  
150

151 **C) Limitations:**  
152

153 Remote participation will be limited by the technology available. No more than one  
154 member may participate remotely in a meeting unless a second member is needed in order  
155 to achieve a quorum. Requests shall be accommodated in the order that they are received.  
156

157 If the remote connection fails or the participating member cannot hear the proceedings or  
158 be heard by all those present, the Councilmember shall depart the meeting until the  
159 connection can be properly restored. In this event, the Mayor will announce the departure  
160 and, when applicable, subsequent rejoining at the meeting.  
161

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