

EXHIBIT A  
CITY OF HARKER HEIGHTS, TEXAS, POLICY AND PROCEDURE ON PUBLIC COMMENTS  
AND RULES OF DECORUM AT CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

**I. Overview**

The City Council of Harker Heights, Texas, encourages public participation in open meetings. Members of the public who desire to address the City Council may speak on issues regarding meeting agenda items and issues not on the meeting agenda, including the use of presentations.

This policy provides guidelines for:

- a. Fair and consistent application of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, (Texas Open Meetings Act), regarding Public Comments; and
- b. Conducting public meetings in an efficient and orderly manner.

**II. Procedures for Speaking to the City Council**

- a. The City shall provide a Public Comment Form. Public Comment Forms shall include the speaker's contact information and provide space for the speaker's comments. Public Comment Forms shall be made available online at [www.harkerheights.gov](http://www.harkerheights.gov) and prior to all City Council meetings.
- b. Individuals in attendance at the meeting who wish to speak shall:
  1. Complete a Public Comment Form to include the speaker's contact information and the posted agenda item or number or the non-agenda topic of discussion; and
  2. Deliver it to the City Secretary prior to the start of the meeting or immediately prior to addressing the council on an item or via email prior to the meeting to City Secretary [hadmin@harkerheights.gov](mailto:hadmin@harkerheights.gov) and
  3. Wait to be called to speak by the Chair.
  4. Speakers shall address the Mayor and City Council.
- c. Individuals in attendance at the meeting who do not wish to speak but want their comments to be entered into the meeting record shall:
  1. Complete a Public Comment Form to include the speaker's contact information and the speaker's comment they wish documented in the meeting record or provide a pre-written document for the record; and
  2. Deliver it to the City Secretary prior to the start of the meeting.
- d. Public Comment Forms received after the start of a Council meeting will be delivered to the City Council in the normal course of business.

- e. Individuals who wish to submit comments digitally shall:
  - 1. Complete the Public Comment Form available at [www.harkerheights.gov](http://www.harkerheights.gov); and
  - 2. Submit the Public Comment Form with all information required, after the posting of the meeting agenda for which the comment is being submitted, but **before the posted start time of the meeting** for which the comment is being submitted.
- f. At every Council meeting, a ‘Presentations by Citizens’ segment will be held, prior to the City Council’s consideration of the Agenda Items, for those Speakers who wish to address the City Council on any item, too include listed agenda items Statutory, public hearings will allow for speakers to be heard on the subject matter of the public hearing at the time the public hearing is held separate from the ‘Presentation by Citizens’. Digitally submitted comments and written comments submitted in person will be made available to the City Council and will be enrolled into the public record of the meeting.

### III. Procedure for Using Presentations/Materials/Handouts

- a. Individuals desiring to use Presentations/Materials/Handouts (collectively referred to as a “Presentation”) of any kind shall satisfy the following:
  - 1. Prior to the Meeting
    - a. Deliver the Presentation to the Office of the City Secretary no later than noon of the day before the meeting.
    - b. Deliver the Presentation via email to [hadmin@harkerheights.gov](mailto:hadmin@harkerheights.gov) or in person at Harker Heights City Hall, 305 Miller’s Crossing, Harker Heights, Texas, 76548.
  - 2. At the Meeting
    - a. Be prepared and able to setup and deliver the Presentation within the allotted speaking time.
    - b. Be prepared and able to setup and deliver the Presentation without the use of City resources.
- b. For presentations delivered in person, a minimum of ten (10) copies shall be given to the City Secretary.
- c. For presentations delivered via email, the City Secretary staff will issue a confirmation email. The City Secretary will distribute an appropriate number of copies of the presentation to the City Council, and City Staff. The City Secretary may utilize electronic means to distribute the presentation.
- d. The City reserves the right to deny the use of any presentation. Failure to follow the procedures for presentation will result in denial of the use of the presentation.
- e. Approved presentations will be documented in the meeting minutes for public record.

#### **IV. Order of Speakers and Time Allotted to Speak:**

- a. Order of Speakers
  1. Agenda Items (Non-Public Hearing): Individuals wishing to speak regarding meeting agenda items that are not Public Hearings will be called to speak at the beginning of the meeting during Presentations by Citizens in the order in which the City Secretary received the Public Comment Forms.
  2. Public Hearing Items: Individuals wishing to speak regarding Public Hearing items on the meeting agenda will be called to speak during the discussion of the related Public Hearing.
  3. Non-Agenda Items: Individuals wishing to speak on issues not listed on the agenda will be called to speak at the beginning of the meeting during Presentations by Citizens in the order in which the City Secretary received the Public Comment Forms.
- b. Time Allotted to Speak
  1. Agenda Items (Non-Public Hearing): Speakers wishing to address the City Council regarding any non-public hearing agenda item(s) shall have a time limit of three (3) minutes per speaker, per agenda item.
  2. Public Hearing Items: Speakers wishing to address the City Council regarding any public hearing agenda item shall have a time limit of three (3) minutes per speaker, per agenda item.
  3. Non-Agenda Items: Speakers wishing to address the City Council regarding any non-agenda item shall have a time limit of three (3) minutes per speaker.
- c. Time Allotted to Speak (with Translator): Non-English Speakers requiring a translator to address the City Council shall be allowed twice the allotted amount of time as English speakers.
- d. Modification of Speaking Time: The Mayor may reduce the speaker time limit uniformly for all speakers to accommodate the number of speakers or improve meeting efficiency. At the discretion of City Council, the speaker may be requested to stand for further discussion of an item if the agenda so allows.
- e. A speaker will not be allowed to yield their three (3) minutes to another speaker.

#### **V. City Council Meeting Rules of Decorum**

- a. Speakers have the right to criticize policies, procedures, programs, and services, but speakers must stick to public comment policy time limits and stay on topic.
- b. All individuals are expected to be respectful and courteous to Council, staff, other speakers, and others in attendance at the meeting.
- c. Behavior that fails to yield the floor when the speaker's time is concluded; is not relevant to the agenda item or City business; repeatedly interrupts a Council member; disturbs the order of the meeting; involves loud, threatening, hostile, abusive, vulgar or obscene language; and disrupts the Council meeting is prohibited.
- d. Any speaker or audience member that violates the Rules of Decorum or engages in disruptive behavior may be subject to removal from the meeting.

- e. No outside placards, banners, signs, pennants, or flags will be permitted in the Council Chambers or in any other room in which the City Council is meeting.
- f. Only City staff, consultants, or petitioners, with scheduled agenda items, can use visual aids during their scheduled presentations, unless otherwise allowed in accordance with Section III. of this policy.
- g. The Mayor or Presiding Officer will enforce these rules, and a person's failure or refusal to comply with an explicit request or order of the Mayor or Presiding Officer may violate the Texas Penal Code, Section 38.13.

Adopted 10/27/2020