

GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

Free expression of all points of view is an important democratic value in this community.

ANY PERSON DESIRING TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL: The City Council requests that those individuals who wish to address the Council on non-agenda, consent calendar, closed session, public hearing, or conduct of business items fill out Speaker Cards available at the meeting. Pursuant to Council procedures, the Mayor will recognize any member of the public who wishes to speak. If you do not fill out a Speaker Card, you will be given an opportunity to speak after all those who have filled out Speaker Cards have spoken.

Guidelines for the Conduct of City Council meetings provide, in part:

- The public can speak about anything within the jurisdiction of the City Council, but the legislative body generally cannot act on or discuss an item not on the agenda, pursuant to the Ralph M. Brown Act.
- All speakers before the City Council shall approach the public microphone and wait to be recognized by the Mayor or acting Mayor. A member of the public is not required to provide his or her name prior to addressing the Council (Government Code §54953.3).
- Questions to staff from the public and staff responses should be directed through the Mayor.
- To encourage and respect expression of all views, meeting rules prohibit clapping, booing, shouts of approval or disagreement, or other disruptive audience participation.
- The audience is requested to be seated in the Council Chambers. Standing or obstructing of aisles is prohibited.

To allow all persons to speak who may wish to do so, each speaker is allowed a maximum of three (3) minutes, or other time limitation as established by the Mayor. An effective approach is to lead with your key point or concern and then explain the reasons underlying it. If others have already expressed your views, you may simply indicate that you agree with the previous speaker. If appropriate, a spokesperson may present the views of a group. Please limit your comments so that everyone has a chance to address the Council.

MANNER OF ADDRESSING THE CITY COUNCIL: Any member of the public desiring to address the City Council may submit a Speaker Card to the City Clerk and proceed to the podium after being recognized by the Presiding Officer. Speakers will be called up in the order the Speaker Cards are received. Those who have not filled out a Speaker Card will be given an opportunity to speak after all those who have filled out Speaker Cards have spoken. All remarks and questions shall be addressed to the City Council; no discussion or action on non-agenda items will be taken pursuant to the Brown Act. No person shall speak without being recognized by the Mayor or acting Mayor. Written comments may be submitted to the City Clerk, 416 N. Franklin Street, Fort Bragg, CA 95437, or emailed to cityclerk@fortbragg.com.

TIME ALLOTMENT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: Thirty (30) minutes shall be allotted to receiving public comments. If necessary, the Mayor or acting Mayor may allot an additional 30 minutes to public comments after Conduct of Business to allow those who have not yet spoken to do so. Any citizen, after being recognized by the Mayor or acting Mayor, may speak on any topic that may be a proper subject for discussion before the City Council for such period of time as the Mayor or acting Mayor may determine is appropriate under the circumstances of the particular meeting, including number of persons wishing to speak or the complexity of a particular topic. Time limitations shall be set without regard to a speaker's point of view or the content of the speech, as long as the speaker's comments are not disruptive of the meeting.

BROWN ACT REQUIREMENTS: The Brown Act does not allow action or discussion on items not on the agenda (subject to narrow exceptions). This will limit the Council's response to questions and requests made during the comment period on non-agenda items.