

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish rules of decorum for members of the public attending, bringing signs or other objects to, and/or addressing the legislative or policy body at meetings held by the City of Harrisonville, including meetings of the Board of Aldermen, and City Boards, Commissions and Committees. The policy is intended to facilitate the conduct of public meetings in an open and orderly manner and in an environment safe for all persons in attendance.

SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This policy applies to persons attending public meetings.

POLICY

The Code of Conduct is intended to promote open meetings that welcome debate of public policy issues being discussed by the Board of Aldermen, and City Boards, Commissions and Committees in an atmosphere of fairness, courtesy, and respect for differing points of view.

1. Public Meeting Decorum:

- a) Persons in the audience will refrain from behavior which will disrupt the public meeting. This will include making loud noises, clapping, shouting, booing, hissing or engaging in any other activity in a manner that disturbs, disrupts or impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting.
- b) Persons in the audience will refrain from creating, provoking or participating in any type of disturbance involving unwelcome physical contact.
- c) Persons in the audience will refrain from using cellular phones and/or pagers while the meeting is in session.
- d) Appropriate attire, including shoes and shirts are required in the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms at all times.
- e) Persons in the audience will not place their feet on the seats in front of them.
- f) All persons entering the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms, including their bags, purses, briefcases and similar belongings, may be subject to search for weapons and other dangerous materials.

2. Signs, Objects or Symbolic Material:

- a) Objects and symbolic materials, such as signs or banners, will be allowed in the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms, with the following restrictions:
 - No objects will be larger than 18 inches by 18 inches.
 - No sticks, posts, poles or other such items will be attached to the signs or other symbolic materials.
 - The items cannot create a building maintenance problem or a fire or safety hazard.

- Materials to be utilized by presenters for a scheduled agenda item may exceed size restrictions.
- b) Persons with objects and symbolic materials such as signs must remain seated when displaying them and must not raise the items above shoulder level, obstruct the view or passage of other attendees, or otherwise disturb the business of the meeting.
- c) Objects that are deemed a threat to persons at the meeting or the facility infrastructure are not allowed. City staff is authorized to remove items and/or individuals from the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms if a threat exists or is perceived to exist. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to: firearms (including replicas and antiques), toy guns, explosive material, and ammunition; knives and other edged weapons; illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia; laser pointers, scissors, razors, scalpels, box cutting knives, and other cutting tools; letter openers, corkscrews, can openers with points, knitting needles, and hooks; hairspray, pepper spray, and aerosol containers; tools; glass containers; and large backpacks and suitcases that contain items unrelated to the meeting.

3. Addressing the Board/Committee:

- a) Persons wishing to address the Board/Committee on any item other than a matter scheduled for a Public Hearing, please raise your hand when the Chair asks for citizen comments and the Chair will recognize you.
- b) If you are able, please make your comments from the freestanding microphone at the front of the room. If you are unable to do so, you may address the Board/Committee from your seat; however, please speak loudly so that the Board/Committee can hear you.
- c) Provide your name and address at the beginning of your remarks for the formal record.
- d) Meeting attendees are usually given four (4) minutes to speak on any agenda item and/or during open forum; the time limit is in the discretion of the Chair of the meeting and may be limited when appropriate. Applicants and appellants in land use matters are usually given more time to speak.
- e) Speakers should discuss topics related to City business on the agenda, unless they are speaking during open forum.
- f) Speakers' comments should be addressed to the full body. Requests to engage the Mayor, Council Members, Board or Committee Members, Commissioners or Staff in conversation will not be honored. Abusive language will not be tolerated.
- g) Speakers will not bring to the podium any items other than a prepared written statement, writing materials, or objects that relevant to the presentation.
- h) If an individual wishes to submit written information, he or she may give it to the City Clerk or other administrative staff at the meeting.
- i) Speakers and any other members of the public will not approach the dais at any time without prior consent from the Chair of the meeting.

Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct which will disturb, disrupt or impede the orderly conduct of the meeting may result in removal from the meeting and/or possible arrest.