

City of Silver Lake

308 Main Street West, Silver Lake, MN 55381

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www.cityofsilverlake.org

City Council Meeting Public Comment Policy

This policy outlines the procedures for public comment during City of Silver Lake City Council meetings. The purpose of the City Council Meeting Public Comment Policy is to ensure that all comments are heard in a timely and effective manner.

- A. **Public participation and comment at council meetings.** City council meetings are the forum for the City Council to conduct the city's business. While city council meetings are open to the public pursuant to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, they are not a forum for public expression. As such, members of the public are not allowed to participate in council discussion and debate without a specific invitation and/or formal recognition by the presiding officer. Members of the public shall not applaud, engage in conversation, or engage in other behavior through words or action that may disrupt the proceedings of council.
- B. **Members of the public shall follow the direction of the Mayor or presiding officer.** Members of the public who do not follow the direction of the Mayor or presiding officer will be warned that further disruptive conduct will result in removal from the meeting. After warning, if the conduct continues, the Mayor or presiding officer may ask the member of the public to leave the meeting room. If the member of the public refuses to follow the direction of the Mayor or presiding officer, the Mayor or presiding officer may direct the sergeant-at-arms to remove the person through any lawful means. In emergency situations, or where conduct is an egregious threat to the safety of the public or the council, a warning is not necessary before the sergeant-at-arms is directed to remove the person.
- C. **Public comment period.** A limited forum for members of the public to speak with the council is provided on the agenda. Public comments during the public comment period are subject to these limitations:
 1. Any person wishing to speak or participate during the Public Comment portion of the meeting must check in with the City Clerk prior to the start of the meeting. An exception may be made by the Mayor or presiding officer, or upon motion of the City Council. Written comments may also be submitted to the City Clerk prior to the start of the meeting. These written comments will be read by the City Clerk to the City Council during the Public Comment portion of the meeting.
 2. Speakers must be recognized by the Mayor or presiding officer before speaking, and are limited to five minutes for comment. Time will start when the comment has begun. The Mayor or presiding officer, at their discretion, may shorten or extend this time limit. The City Council can, through motion, overrule the Mayor or presiding officer. If there is not sufficient time at the meeting to hear all public comments, the

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comment period may be deferred to the next regular council meeting or at a continued meeting.

3. Comment will only be received during the Public Comment portion of the meeting, unless the Mayor or presiding officer deems the comment necessary for meeting information. The City Council can, through a motion, decide to hear one or more speakers at any time during the City Council meeting.
4. All public comments must be given at or near the podium in the Council Chambers. Those with a physical disability will be accommodated and need not speak at or near the podium. The City Council will not address comments made out of turn. Any person whom continuously disrupts any portion of the City Council meeting will be asked to leave the Council Chambers.
5. Speakers must direct their comments towards the Mayor or presiding officer.
6. Speakers shall not use obscene, profane or threatening language, nor conduct themselves in a threatening, loud, or boisterous manner that disrupts the conduct of the meeting or the security of the public.
7. Speakers are required to follow the direction of the Mayor or presiding officer.
8. Speakers who do not follow the direction of the Mayor or presiding officer will be warned that further disruptive conduct will result in removal from the meeting. After warning, if the conduct continues the Mayor or presiding officer may ask the speaker to leave. If the speaker refuses to follow the direction of the Mayor or presiding officer, the Mayor or presiding officer may direct the sergeant-at-arms to remove the speaker through any lawful means. In emergency situations, or when conduct is an egregious threat to the safety of the public or the council, a warning is not necessary before the sergeant-at-arms is directed to remove the speaker.
9. Council will generally not respond at the same meeting where an issue is initially raised by a member of the public. Matters raised for the first time by members of the public will generally be referred to staff for further research and possible report or action at a future council meeting.

Approved: April 20, 2020