

LARA WEISIGER

From: Dorothy Freeman <dfreeman@pacbell.net>
Sent: Tuesday, May 15, 2018 10:59 AM
To: Trish Spencer; Frank Matarrese; Marilyn Ezy Ashcraft; Jim Oddie; Malia Vella; LARA WEISIGER
Subject: May 15, 2018 Agenda Item 6E New rules governing Council meetings.

Mayor Trish Spencer
Vice Mayor Malia Vella
Councilmember Frank Matarrese
Councilmember Marilyn Ashcraft
Councilmember Jim Oddie

Dear Mayor Spencer and Council Members;

Regarding: May 15, 2018 Agenda Item 6E New rules governing Council meetings.

Presently, throughout the national government, there is a plan to limit all citizens right to participate in their government. Unfortunately, that plan seems to be flowing down to the City of Alameda's governing body.

It stands to reason that when a lot of people actually leave their busy lives and attend a City Council meeting to speak out, it must be an item of great importance to them and they want their voices to be heard. So in the subcommittee's wisdom, which was created to review the existing rules and provide recommendations, they have recommended silencing the people just because more than 13 people bother to leave their busy lives and show up at a council meeting.

Many people come to the meeting with prepared information that fits within the current 3 minute allowance. It's sometimes possible to shorten their information to 2 minutes but 1 minute is impossible. Besides, the public has a right to address what is before the council. Taking away the public's right to address their elected official on a subject that is important to them should not be taken lightly and should be protected. The Council doesn't know, prior to a person speaking, if they are pro or con toward a subject nor what their reasoning is until they speak.

The Open Government Commission started as a partner in the discussion to make changes to the council meetings. I don't understand why the sub-committee decided 2 things, 1) To ignore the proposals of the Open Government Commission which decided to limit proclamations to a total of 15 minutes per meeting, not 2 minutes per proclamation, and
2) eliminate the ceding of time to other speakers in the public section. They did not recommend limiting time to less than three minutes.

I do not support the recommendation to limit the voice of the public. The public should be encouraged to attend and participate in the meetings and not be pushed aside. After all, how can elected officials act on behalf of a public that can barely be heard.

Respectfully

Dorothy Freeman

cc: City Clerk Lara Weisiger

LARA WEISIGER

From: Paul Foreman <ps4man@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, May 11, 2018 11:19 AM
To: Trish Spencer; Malia Vella; Frank Matarrese; Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; Jim Oddie
Cc: LARA WEISIGER; Janet Kern
Subject: Item 6E on May 15 Council Agenda-Adoption of Resolution Rescinding Resolutions 12567, 13031, 13304,...

ACT

Alameda Citizens Task Force

Vigilance, Truth, Civility

Dear Mayor Spencer and Councilmembers:

We are concerned about the drastic reduction in public comment time presented to Council in the above-captioned proposed Resolution.

We believe that, while we have a represented municipal government, that, at a local level, it is very important to still sustain a "town hall" environment where every person has the right to speak for a reasonable period of time. The proposal goes much further by limiting the speaking time to as little as one minute, depending on the number of speaker slips turned in. This has the regressive effect of limiting public input on the issues of greatest interest and importance to the public! We note that this change is not recommended by the Open Government Commission, but was added by the Council sub-committee of Mr. Oddie and Ms. Ashcraft. The present system which allows the reduction of speaking time only by majority Council vote should be retained.

We also object to the listing of this item, which is of great public interest and importance, as the last item on the agenda, especially since it includes a major reduction in public input into Council decisions. We suggest either moving it up or rescheduling it for a future meeting with better agenda placement.

Sincerely,

Paul S Foreman
ACT Authorized Correspondent

LARA WEISIGER

From: Paul Foreman <ps4man@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 09, 2018 11:00 AM
To: LARA WEISIGER; Janet Kern
Subject: FW: Item 6E on May 15 Council Agenda-Adoption of Resolution Rescinding Resolutions 12567, 13031, 13304,...

Lara and Janet

I forgot To copy you on this.

Paul

From: Paul Foreman [mailto:ps4man@comcast.net]
Sent: Wednesday, May 09, 2018 10:53 AM
To: 'Trish Spencer' (tspencer@alamedaca.gov); mvella@alamedaca.gov; fmatarrese@alamedaca.gov; Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft (mezzyashcraft@alamedaca.gov); joddie@alamedaca.gov
Subject: Item 6E on May 15 Council Agenda-Adoption of Resolution Rescinding Resolutions 12567, 13031, 13304,...

Dear Mayor Spencer and Councilmembers:

I am writing to you in my capacity as a Commissioner on the Open Government Commission. I am in complete agreement with the letter directed to you by Irene Deiter and Heather Little, but I need to address some of my personal concerns.

I believe that, while we have a represented municipal government, that, at a local level, it is very important to still sustain a "town hall" environment where every person has the right to speak for a reasonable period of time. The proposal by the Council sub-committee, goes much further by limiting the speaking time to as little as one minute, depending on the number of speaker slips turned in. This has the regressive effect of limiting public input on the issues of greatest interest and importance to the public! The present system which allows the reduction of speaking time only by majority Council vote should be retained.

I assume that the rationale of the Council sub-committee is to reduce the length of meetings. The OGC proposal already accomplishes a lot in that direction by limiting Councilmember comments to nine minutes on each issue and reducing the time slot for proclamations. I would submit that the most time at meetings is taken by Staff and Developers making hour long power point presentations on matters already covered in writing and posted to the public in the "details" document that supplements the agenda. I am told by prior Councilmembers that these presentations were very limited by past Councils. The only meeting time that should be taken for these presentations is for clarifying questions from Councilmembers. You could even consider having written clarifying questions being submitted by the public.

I am also concerned with the manner in which this matter is being presented to Council. Council voted for the OGC and a Council sub-committee to do parallel reviews.. Both bodies submitted reports, but the recommendation signed by the City Clerk and City Attorney is for the Council sub-committee version and the proposed Resolution incorporates the same. It does not make sense to me to have a third body superimpose their view of the matter, nor do I see anything in the Motion authorizing this role. I don't quarrel with "Staff" communicating their views to Council, but do quarrel with them framing the issue for a vote by Council. There are other ways in which the disagreements could have been resolved or, if not resolved, presented to Council for guidance in framing the final Resolution.

Finally, I object to the listing of this item, which is of great public interest and importance, as the last item on the agenda, especially since it includes a major reduction in public input into Council decisions. I suggest either moving it up or rescheduling it for a future meeting with better agenda placement.

Sincerely,

Paul S. Foreman

Re: Rules of Order - Agenda Item #6-E, May 15, 2018

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

We are pleased the city council is considering adopting Rosenberg's Rules of Order. We also appreciate the edits made to the Open Government Commission's draft supplemental rules but would like to offer some rationale for why the Commission did not include the added language proposed in the draft resolution.

The supplemental rules are "additions" not "exceptions" to Rosenberg's Rules. They were added because Rosenberg was silent on those issues.

Rosenberg does not mention the term "council" as the rules may be used for any meeting. The Commission followed Rosenberg and purposely used the term "member" so that all city boards and commissions could refer to these rules as a guide for their meetings. Thus, we recommend eliminating references to the city council.

Under "Public Comment on Agenda Items," issues relating to courtesy and decorum and the basic format of meetings are already covered in Rosenberg's Rules. Thus, we urge you to remove the following language from the supplemental rules, as it is confusing and unnecessary: "Public comment is not permitted on motions. Presentations and Council questions precede public comment. Public comment shall not be used to elicit a debate and speakers shall avoid personal attacks on members of the Council, staff or public." Furthermore, even though the Commission listed "suspension of the rules," that rule is also part of Rosenberg's Rules and may be omitted in the resolution.

The Commission debated but declined to lower the three-minute rule for public comments when there is large number of speakers. The reasoning was that there might be a short meeting agenda and/or other agenda items might have few or no speakers. Rosenberg's Rules allow the chair to limit the time of public speakers or any councilmember to make a motion to suspend the three-minute rule. And, perhaps the recipients of proclamations could be told ahead of time to limit their comments, if any, to a few words.

Finally, under "Council Comments," the Commission purposely framed the speaking times in intervals (three times, three minutes) to allow for discussion, listing it as "deliberations." The goal was to discourage long commentaries. And, as currently written, it is unclear if the proposed nine-minute rule includes clarifying questions.

One or both of us will be attending the May 15 meeting should any questions arise concerning the Commission's intentions.

Sincerely,

Commissioners Irene Dieter and Heather Little
Subcommittee tasked with reviewing the existing rules and providing recommendations to Open Government Commission