



**TO:** Mayor and Council  
**FROM:** Rebecca Huerta, City Secretary  
**DATE:** January 7, 2015  
**SUBJECT:** Parliamentary Procedure during Council Meetings

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As we start this new Council term, I'd like to introduce a number of improvements to the parliamentary procedures we use during City Council meetings. These procedures align with best practices used in many cities in Texas. The improvements add clarity for the public about the issues the Council is considering and the proposed action to be taken. The examples to follow outline procedures for a regular agenda item and public hearing/first reading ordinance item.

### **REGULAR AGENDA**

#### **Current Process:**

1. Mayor calls for agenda item to be considered (e.g. "Let's move to Item 12").
2. Staff makes presentation.
3. Mayor calls for public comment.
4. Mayor calls for Council comment.
5. Once comments/discussion has ended, Mayor calls for roll call vote.
6. City Secretary calls the roll, and announces the result of the vote.

#### **New Process:**

1. **NEW:** Mayor calls for agenda item to be considered AND reads the subheading of the item to be discussed. For example:  
*Mayor: "Let's move to Item 12. Item 12 is a resolution authorizing a landscape maintenance agreement for landscape improvements on State Highway 286 at J.C. Elliott Landfill Transfer Station."*
2. Staff presentation on the purpose of the item.
3. Mayor calls for public comment.
4. Mayor calls for Council comments.

5. **NEW: Bring forward the motion:** Once recognized by the Mayor, a member makes a motion for approval or passage of the item. If there is a second, the Mayor restates the motion.

1<sup>st</sup> Council Member: *“I move to approve the resolution.”*

2<sup>nd</sup> Council Member: *“Second.”*

Mayor: *“It has been moved and seconded to approve the resolution.”*

6. **NEW: Considering the motion:** Once the motion is stated by the Mayor and on the floor, the Mayor asks if there is any further discussion. At this point, the Council can make motions to amend, table, etc., the action, if desired, or end discussion.

Mayor: *“There being no further discussion, the question is to approve the resolution.*

*Let’s vote.”*

7. The Mayor calls for roll call vote.
8. City Secretary calls the roll, and announces the result of the vote.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **Current Process**

1. Mayor calls for agenda item to be considered (e.g. “Let’s move to Item 12”).
2. Staff makes presentation.
3. Mayor asks for a motion to open public hearing. Motion is made and seconded by Council members, and passed.
4. Mayor calls for public comment.
5. Once comments/discussion has ended, Mayor asks for a motion to close the public hearing. Motion is made and seconded by Council members, and passed.
6. Mayor asks for Council comments.
7. Once discussion/debate has ended, Mayor calls for vote.
8. City Secretary calls roll call, and announces the result of the vote.

### **New Process:**

1. **NEW:** Mayor introduces the proposed item by reading the subheading of the item to be discussed. For example:

Mayor: *“Item 6 is a Public Hearing and First Reading Ordinance to consider Case No. 1114-06 Robert S. Browning, a rezoning from Farm Rural to Commercial located at 3718 Airline Road.”*

2. Staff presentation on the purpose of the item.

3. **NEW:** Mayor opens public hearing. No motion and second by Council members are necessary to open.
4. Mayor calls for public comment.
5. **NEW:** Mayor closes public hearing after all interested persons have had an opportunity to comment. Again, no motion and second by Council members are necessary.
6. Mayor asks for Council comments
7. **NEW: Bring forward the motion:** Once recognized by the Mayor, a member makes a motion for approval or passage of the item. If there is a second, the Mayor restates the motion for clarity.
 

1<sup>st</sup> Council Member: “I move that we approve the ordinance.”

2<sup>nd</sup> Council Member: “Second.”

Mayor: “It has been moved and seconded that we approve the ordinance.”
8. **NEW: Considering the motion:** Once the motion is stated by the Mayor and on the floor, the Mayor asks if there is any further discussion. At this point, the Council can make motions to amend, table, etc. the action, if desired, or end discussion.
9. Once debate has ended, the Mayor calls for roll call vote.
10. City Secretary calls for roll call vote, and announces the result of the vote.

**Additional best practices:**

1. If a Council member knows in advance that they will be proposing an amendment(s) to an action item, it would be appreciated if they would notify the City Secretary in advance. Providing the amendment(s) in advance will allow staff the opportunity to determine the legality and feasibility of the amendment(s) if applicable. The City Secretary will also notify the Mayor so she can prepare to restate the amendment during the meeting.
2. If the proposed amendment(s) is complex, it would be appreciated if the Council member would provide the wording in writing for clarity.

In conclusion, my recommendation is that we adopt these improvements to our parliamentary procedures. If you have any questions or comments, please let me know.