

Memorandum

Date: October 9, 2008

To: Norm King, Mayor
Members, West Linn City Council

From: Chris Jordan, City Manager *cg*

Subject: Council Rules

Earlier this year, some Councilors expressed an interest in clarifying the requirement that Community Comments be: *"on matters related to City government and properly the object of Council consideration."*

Staff has discussed this with Mayor King and the following suggested modifications (marked in red) to the Council Rules might assist in clarifying this matter:

Community Comment. *At the beginning of each regular meeting, the Council shall designate a time for Community Comment, which shall be reserved for citizens to address the Council on matters related to City government and properly the object of Council consideration. Such comments should not address items on the agenda for Council discussion and/or action. Persons wishing to speak shall be allowed to do so only after completing the testimony form provided. Time is limited generally to three (3) minutes for each speaker, and a maximum of 30 minutes at each meeting. The Mayor may choose to change the allowed time based on agenda length. Community Comments should be addressed to the Council and not to staff or chamber audience. Testimony on potential, actual or appealable land use actions will not be permitted. Comments that are personal, offensive or slanderous are not permitted. Comments that constitute political advocacy will not be permitted. Remarks that promote or market private, either for profit or non-profit, events or organizations will not be allowed. Only remarks concerning events sponsored or cosponsored by the City of West Linn and government sponsored events for the benefit of West Linn residents will be allowed. Personal attacks on any member of the Council, City staff or other individuals will not be permitted. Opinions or comments regarding a vote, behavior or statements of any member of the Council while acting as a Councilor or Mayor will be permitted. Speakers making Community Comments should clearly distinguish in the text of their remarks if their comments are opinion or fact. If the remarks are facts the speaker should reference the source of the fact.*

The purpose of the Community Comment period is to provide citizens an opportunity to be heard by the Council on issues related to the business of the City government, but not on the agenda. Councilors should refrain from engaging speakers in debate or extended dialogue, or directing questions to staff for immediate response. Councilors should refer complaints or questions to the City Manager or the appropriate staff person.

Order and Decorum

The Council may wish to consider the following language to the section of the Council Rules titled "Order and Decorum:"

A. Any of the following shall be sufficient cause for the Sergeant-at-Arms to, at the direction of the Mayor, or by a majority of the Council present, remove any person from the Council chamber for the duration of the meeting:

1. Use of unreasonably loud or disruptive language, including personal, offensive or slanderous remarks, or actions that are boisterous, threatening or personally abusive.

If the Council agrees with these changes, it may wish to take action to amend the rules during Business from the Council at its October 13 Council meeting. If approved by the Council, it would be our intention to make this information readily available to those who may choose to speak at Council meetings.