

RESOLUTION NO. 2018-22

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING GUIDELINES FOR CIVIL DISCOURSE IN THE COMMUNITY

WHEREAS, the nature of public debate nationally has become increasingly, yet needlessly, rancorous and divisive; and

WHEREAS, an atmosphere of incivility and disrespect can have a damaging effect on the proceedings, on the quality of debate, and on the practice of democracy itself;

WHEREAS, the citizens of West Linn place high value on respect and civility and see that these characteristics are essential to any healthy community; and

WHEREAS, the West Linn City Council sometimes addresses controversial issues about which people often feel passionately, which at times leads to disrespectful or uncivil behavior; and

WHEREAS, the West Linn City Council desires for more civil discourse and discussion in the community and at City Hall; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THE CITY OF WEST LINN recognizes the need for guidelines to achieve more civil discourse in the community and at City Hall; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the West Linn City Council adopts the attached guidelines in order to find positive resolutions to the issues that face our city.

This resolution was PASSED and ADOPTED this 19th day of November, 2018, and takes effect upon passage.



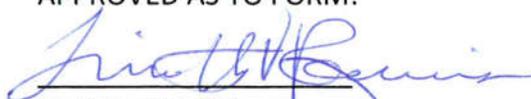
RUSSELL B. AXELROD, MAYOR

ATTEST:



KATHY MOLLUSKY, CITY RECORDER

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



CITY ATTORNEY

Working Together For a Better West Linn

Guidance for Civil Discourse

(West Linn City Council, November 2018)

The West Linn City Council desires to promote civil discourse through action and education to improve public policy decisions and processes. For this goal we prepared this guidance to encourage civility and a spirit of community in our public settings, meetings and correspondence. We recognize the differences among us and that spirited debate is a vital part of our democracy. Participation in civic and public life does not require us to sacrifice our deepest convictions; rather, we best protect our own rights by protecting the rights of others and adhering to high ethical standards. Civil discourse means, at a minimum, mutually respectful, courteous, constructive and orderly communication. With this in mind we propose the following ground rules for public engagement:

- Assume the best in others and remember that everyone wants what they believe is best for the City.
- Be tolerant and acknowledge and accept that you or others may disagree about some things despite your best efforts to find common ground; create a welcoming environment for different opinions and acknowledge common ground or areas of agreement.
- Speak in a way that encourages others to listen openly, and listen in a way that encourages others to speak honestly; use courtesy titles (e.g., Mr., Ms., Sir, Mayor, Councilor) and a civil tone of voice.
- Discuss policies and ideas, not people; talk to each other not at each other, and use “I” statements and avoid words like “always” and “never.”
- Be brief and constructive, not long and destructive.
- Don’t grandstand, exaggerate or mislead to make your point.
- Don't disrespect others by making demeaning or inappropriate comments, facial expressions, or gestures; no eye rolling, sighing, or checking out of the conversation.
- Listen with an open mind and an open heart, trusting that everyone else is speaking just as sincerely as you are; remember that listening is not the same as agreeing.
- Be respectful, take turns, and don’t interrupt others or partake in side conversations; learn to disagree without being disagreeable.
- Treat everyone, including City staff, as professionals.
- Be open to compromise.
- Be respectful in private conversations and when using email and social media; treat all communications as if they might appear on the cover of your local newspaper.