



Ad Hoc Rules Committee January 22, 2021 Meeting Minutes

The January 22, 2021, remote Ad Hoc Rules Committee meeting was called to order at 7:30 AM on Zoom.

Attendance:

Spencer Thibodeau, Councilor District 2

April Fournier, Councilor at Large

Mark Dion, Councilor, District 5

Nick Mavodones, Councilor at Large

Kathleen M. Snyder, Mayor

Pious Ali, Councilor at Large

Danielle West-Chuhta Corporation Counsel

Katherine Jones, Clerk

Deivy Periana, Sr. Executive Assistant to the Executive Department and Staff Coordinator to the Ad Hoc Rules Committee.

Jessica Grondin, Director of Communication and Digital Services, hosted the zoom meeting.

The committee unanimously voted to nominate Councilor Spencer Thibodeau as chair of the committee. Councilor Thibodeau accepted the nomination.

Committee members discussed selecting a regular date and time for meetings. They agreed for the next meeting to be on Thursday, February 4, 2021 at 5:30 PM.

Councilor Thibodeau, chair of the committee proceeded to review the current list of Rules of Procedures, and the followings were unanimously agreed upon no changes were needed at this time:

Rule 2- Quorum; Adjourned Meetings

Rule 3- Enactments

Rule 4 - Ordinance; Style

Rule 5 - Order and Resolve; Style
Rule 6 - Readings
Rule 7 - Readings on Two Separate Days; Waivers
Rule 8- Yeas and Nays Taken; When
Rule 9 - Ordinances; Effective When
Rule 10 - Order, Resolve; Effective When
Rule 11- Emergency Ordinances, Orders and Resolves
Rule 12 - Item for Meetings; Filed When
Rule 14 - Presiding Officer to Chair Meetings
Rule 15- Preserve Order Decide All Questions of Order
Rule 16- Declare Votes; Cause Return of Votes
Rule 18- Motion to Adjourn; Lay on Table
Rule 19- Reconsideration
Rule 20- Failure to Pass for Lack of Required Votes
Rule 21- Motion for Previous Question
Rule 22- Manner of Speaking
Rule 24- Not to Interrupt
Rule 25 - Breach of Rules and Orders
Rule 26- Member Excused From Voting; When
Rule 27- Motion to be Reduced to Writing; When
Rule 28- Division of a Question
Rule 29- Motion for Referral
Rule 30 - Priority of Business
Rule 31- Suspension of Rules; Amendment or Repeal
Rule 33- Parliamentary Proceedings
Rule 34- Council Committees
Rule 36- Council Committees; How Chosen (**Clerical error, Rule should be #35**)
Rule 36- Council Committees; Public Comment
Rule 37- Smoking at Meetings
Rule 38-Confidentiality

The Committee agreed to flag/ redline some minors changes to the following rules:

Rule 1 - Regular Meetings and Council Workshop Sessions
Move Council Meetings to 5:00 PM, instead of 5:30 PM. This change will only apply to Council Meetings. The Committee agreed to this change.

The Committee also agreed that more information was necessary to consider the change the City Council inauguration time from noon to the evening, perhaps combine it with the School Board inauguration and have it at the

Merrill Auditorium, post-Covid. A separation between the inauguration and the business meeting, a proposal to have the inauguration on a Monday, and the meeting the following Wednesday.

Mrs. Katherine Jones will follow up with the School Superintendent in regards to the proposed idea and report back to the Committee.

Rule 13 - Sponsorship

Committee agreed that standing/recurring proclamations and resolutions should be sponsored by the Mayor, but it was agreed that Councilors could bring to the table any proclamation that is not a standing proclamation which they would like to sponsor (and have the option to read at the Council meetings). Mayor will continue to solemnly sponsor all resolutions.

Rule 17- Debate; Rules of

The Committee agreed to add “or to call the question” to the existing rule, which is consistent with Robert Rules of Order (Corporation Counsel agreed).

Rule 23- Length of Statements by Members

The Committee agreed to reduce Councilor speaking time from 10 minutes to 5 minutes per agenda item; provided that any Councilor can request an additional 5 minutes if necessary.

Rule 32 - Procedure for addressing Council

The Committee agreed that public comment should run from 6PM to 7PM; provided, however, that upon a majority vote of the Council, the public comment period could be re-opened later in the meeting after the Council’s consideration of all other agenda items. The Committee also agreed that if public comment was reopened, it could not start after 11 P.M. The Committee expressed concern that there have been instances where items scheduled to be taken up on the agenda were postponed because of an extensive public comment on items not on the Council’s agenda. The Committee agreed that from a fairness perspective, this change would continue the Council’s 6PM public comment period, while also providing certainty to items on the Council’s agenda for each evening. The Committee requested additional information as to whether public comment should be stopped after a certain time if re-opened later in the meeting. The Committee did not make a final decision on an end time for public comment, but will consider the issue at the next Committee meeting.

The Committee also agreed to change “may” in Rule 32 (9) to “shall.”

There will be a correction to Rule 34 - Council Committees. The Committee listed under Economic Development and Housing Committee has been renamed to Housing and Economic Development Committee.

It was also noticed that Rule 36 is listed twice under 2 different Rules, presumably a clerical error. Should be Rule 35 instead.

Chair of the Committee, Councilor Thibodeau allowed Mr. Rowe to express his comments. Mr. Rheault was discontent about the conversations during the meeting and expressed that the Committee just wanted to inhibit the public from engaging in the meetings.

Chair of the Committee, Councilor Thibodeau reinstated that the next Ad Hoc Rules Committee will be on Thursday, February 4th at 5:30 PM and Public Comments will be allowed.

Councilor Thibodeau made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilor Dion, vote 3-0. Councilor Mavodones was dismissed earlier due to prior commitments. The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 AM.