



City Council Rules Committee

Monday, March 7, 2022, 8:00 AM

Remote Meeting Minutes

Approved by the Rules Committee on March 28, 2022

Rules Committee Members:

Councilor Andrew Zarro, Chair

Mayor Kate Snyder

Councilor Pious Ali

Councilor Mark Dion

The meeting, held by ZOOM technology, convened at 8:02 a.m. on March 7, 2022.

Attendees: Committee members Councilor Andrew Zarro, Chair, Mayor Kate Snyder, Councilor Pious Ali, and Councilor Mark Dion, and Acting Corporation Counsel Jen Thompson, and assistant Nancy English. Members of the public Sarah Michniewicz and John P. attended.

Councilor Zarro began the meeting with the review of redlined changes attached to the agenda, beginning with Rule 19, Reconsideration. Acting Corporation Counsel Jen Thompson said the redline changes began with the substitution of the words "Prevailing side" for the word "majority." In Rule 32, subsection 5, and Rule 36 the changes concerned how members of the public identify themselves. In Rule 32, "abusive or disrespectful" was proposed in place of the term "scurrilous."

Mayor Snyder said the revisions looked good except that Rule 32, subsection 4, concerning the time of the non-agenda item public comment period, which could be, as it is in the School Board agenda, set at the end of the meeting.

The change of time of non-agenda item public comment was discussed at length, with Mayor Snyder and Councilor Dion stating why the end of the meeting was best – since it would prioritize the items on the agenda already vetted by committee, with staff members ready to answer questions. Chair Zarro and Councilor Ali stated their preference for this public comment to be scheduled at the beginning of the meeting, which would make it certain when it would occur. Although scheduled for 6:00 p.m., it often comes later, after the council finishes deliberating on an item on the agenda started before the 6:00 p.m.

hour. Chair Zarro said putting this comment at the end of the agenda would mean fewer people would participate.

Given the split in support between the beginning and the end of the meeting for non-agenda item comment, Mayor Snyder suggested the other changes could go forward with unanimous approval from the Rules Committee while the time of the non-agenda item period would be left to the full council for a decision.

Further discussion concerned changes proposed by Councilor Ali to allow public comment by Council-invited participants at workshops. Jen Thompson said workshops are now limited to councilors and city staff. If workshops were opened up to comment by Council- guests, the workshop would likely become a public forum and likely necessitate that all public comment be permitted, which might impede the unique aims of workshops. However, if comment by members of the public is desired at a workshop, the Council's existing rules would permit public comment by a vote to waive the usual rule.

Discussion of process followed. Councilor Dion said workshops were for educating the city councilors following the work on items in committee, where public comment is invited, and before the public hearing that is required once the item is being considered for a vote before the full City Council.

Mayor Snyder said outside experts are best enlisted while a committee is reviewing an item. Chair Zarro said if more information is needed at the workshop, an item should return to committee for additional review.

Councilor Ali agreed that the exploratory process in committee was a good process and that he would let this proposal go.

Chair Zarro opened the meeting for public comment and attendee Sarah Michniewicz asked what would happen if a member of the public declined to give a last name. She also said it can be frustrating to wait all night to speak, and that no mention had been made of the behavior of councilors during the non-agenda item public comment period.

Chair Zarro closed the public comment period and asked for a motion to approve the revisions in the rules attachment. Mayor Snyder moved to approve, and Councilor Dion seconded that motion. The vote was 4-0 in favor.

Mayor Snyder moved and Councilor Dion seconded approval of moving the non-agenda item public comment period to either the beginning or the end of a council meeting, which passed by a vote of 4-0.

Councilors and the Mayor noted that the minutes of the last meeting had been left off the agenda, and their approval was scheduled for the next Rules Committee meeting, that date to be set following this meeting.

Mayor Snyder moved and Councilor Zarro seconded the motion to adjourn, which passed

by a roll call vote of 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:13 a.m.