

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-268-R**

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A POLICY FOR  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION  
DURING CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Madison is empowered to receive public comments during City Council meetings, and it welcomes input from members of the community so that elected officials and City staff can more effectively govern and serve Madison residents; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council may adopt reasonable time, place, and manner parameters for receiving public comments; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council has studied best practices and legal guidelines pertaining to receiving public comments, preparing minutes, and running efficient meetings according to rules of parliamentary procedure; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council has determined that updating its policy pertaining to receiving public comments will enable the City Council to conduct business more efficiently during meetings, provide ample opportunity for residents to weigh in on matters of public concern within and outside of City Council meetings, and enhance security for residents attending the meeting and the City's computer networks;

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED** by the City Council of the City of Madison, Alabama, that the City Council adopts the following policy for hearing and receiving public comments, conducting public hearings, and providing for recording during City Council meetings:

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY**

**Public Comments Section of the Agenda:**

- Speakers who would like to address general City business and agenda items must speak during the Public Comments portion of the meeting.
- During the Public Comments portion of the agenda, all speakers will have a maximum of three minutes to address the City Council.
- No speakers will be allowed to speak more than once during Public Comments or give their surplus time to other speakers.
- Before or during the Council meeting, speakers must sign up for Public Comments via the City's automated SMS system or by filling out a card available from the City Clerk. The Council President will call speakers in the order that they sign up via the automated form or card.
- Speakers signing up for Public Comments prior to the City Council meeting are encouraged to provide additional information about the topic to be discussed. Doing so will allow City Staff to research the issue and potentially provide a resolution or more information by the time of the meeting.

**Public Hearings Section of the Agenda:**

- Speakers and public hearing applicants who would like to address agenda items listed under the Public Hearings section of the agenda must reserve their comments for the public hearing. Before or during the Council meeting, speakers must sign up for the public hearing at which they would like to address Council via the City's automated SMS system or by filling out a card available from the City Clerk.
- During the Public Hearings section of the agenda, the Council President will call speakers in the following order, and speakers will observe the following time limits:
  - 1. Project initiator, applicant, owner or agent of business or property that is the subject of the hearing (15 minutes).
  - 2. Residents within the noticed area of the subject property (5 minutes).
  - 3. All other members of the public (5 minutes).
- No speaker may speak more than once during a public hearing or give surplus time to other speakers.
- The Council President has the discretion to allow rebuttals during public hearings or to allow speakers to talk more than once if new information has been presented to the City Council.
- The Council President may limit comments that are repetitious or irrelevant to the subject of the public hearing.

**General Rules:**

- Each speaker must state his or her name and City Council district, street, or neighborhood prior to presenting comments.
- Speakers must provide their name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address on the City's SMS sign-up system or card so that City staff or council members may follow up with them. The City will not disclose speakers' personal contact information.
- Speakers shall address their remarks to the City Council President.
- Speakers who are part of a group with the same position on a matter are encouraged to select one representative to present their views to the City Council (ex: HOA members with a position on rezoning may consolidate their comments and present them through a representative of the organization.).
- Speakers who would like to present a power point or other digital media must e-mail their presentations to the City Clerk and IT department by 5:00p.m. on the Friday preceding the City Council meeting. Electronic files brought to the City Council meeting at the time of the meeting will not be loaded for use, and the City will not plug in outside computers, players, or presentation devices into its network.
- If someone cannot attend a meeting or public hearing, the City Council will accept e-mails, letters, or phone calls. Written correspondence must be submitted to the City Clerk's office by noon on the day of the Council meeting. City Council members welcome and will read written correspondence pertaining to agenda items prior to the Council meeting, but they are not required or expected to read correspondence out loud and verbatim during the meeting. Written correspondence for public comments will not be a part of the City's minutes, but written correspondence that is germane to the subject of public hearings will be summarized in the minutes.
- Individuals wishing to video or audio record the Council meeting must adhere to the following procedures so that the City can notify people attending the meeting,

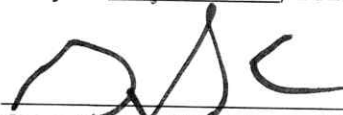
particularly minors, that they may be recorded:

- Anyone planning to record all or a substantial portion of the public comments, public hearings, or the business portions of the meeting must place recording equipment (e.g., cameras, phones, tripods, etc.) in an area designated by the City Council President.
- When the Council meeting begins, the Council President will announce to those attending that the City and others are recording the meeting.
- Video and audio recordings must be performed in such a way that they do not disrupt or interfere with the Council's operation of the meeting or others who are attending the meeting.
- Arrangements for placing special microphones or lighting equipment must be coordinated with City staff prior to the start of the meeting.
- Individuals who would like to request reasonable accommodations pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act may direct their requests to the City's ADA Coordinator.
- City Council members will not engage in dialogue or Q&A with speakers, but they will forward all questions to City staff for a response within a reasonable timeframe during or after the meeting. Any document requests must be submitted to the City Clerk's office.
- The City Council will not comment on pending claims or lawsuits. The City takes allegations of misconduct seriously, and any such concerns should be reported to the Mayor or City Attorney's office so that City staff can address concerns through proper procedural channels, protect the legal and privacy interests of involved parties, and provide consistency in review and resolution of claims or disputes.
- Disruptive behavior including the use of profanity, threats, or vulgar or threatening gestures are not proper for City Council meetings or correspondence to City Council. Speakers who are disruptive may be removed from the City Council chambers.

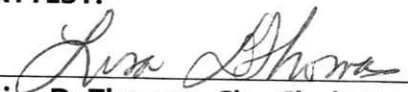
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City Clerk shall provide copies of this policy to Madison residents upon request, shall publish the policy on the City website, and shall provide current contact information for the appropriate City officials described in this Resolution;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that each and every provision of this Resolution is hereby declared to be an independent provision, and the holding of any provision hereof to be void or invalid for any reason shall not affect any other provision hereof.

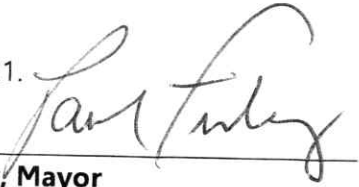
**READ, PASSED, AND ADOPTED** at a regularly scheduled meeting of the City Council of the City of Madison, Alabama, on this 13<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2021.

  
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**Greg Shaw, City Council President**  
City of Madison, Alabama

**ATTEST:**

  
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**Lisa D. Thomas, City Clerk-Treasurer**  
City of Madison, Alabama

APPROVED this 15<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2021.



**Paul Finley, Mayor**  
City of Madison, Alabama