
1 **R2018-009: A RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A MEETING ACCESS & DECORUM**
2 **POLICY FOR ALL COUNCIL MEETINGS & MEETINGS OF CITY BOARDS,**
3 **COMMISSIONS & ADVISORY BOARDS.**

4 **Applicant/Purpose:** Staff/ to establish ground rules & a standard of conduct for conducting
5 public business in a civil fashion.

6
7 **Brief:**

- 8 • Rules of Decorum are proposed to preserve the intent of open government & maintain a
9 positive environment for conducting public meetings. The proposal recognizes that:
 - 10 ○ There are often dissenting viewpoints of the policies & actions contemplated
 - 11 by Council, its Boards, Commissions, & Advisory Boards & passionately debated
 - 12 within the body & by the citizens.
 - 13 ○ Council encourages the appropriate & passionate expression of all viewpoints.
 - 14 ○ Council nonetheless believes that such expressions & the conduct of all persons
 - 15 in a public meeting should be subject to reasonable standards of civility.
- 16 • Upon adoption the Rules will be included in the agenda & may be referenced at the
17 beginning of each Council meeting & work session by the presiding officer.

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19 **Issues:**

- 20 • Proposed Rules of Decorum include:
 - 21 ○ All persons may address Council on a matter of public concern not on the
 - 22 agenda by signing in to speak.
 - 23 ○ To be recognized on a non-agenda matter, speakers must provide name,
 - 24 address, whether they are City citizens & the topic of their concern.
 - 25 ○ Citizens may address Council before non-citizens in the 30-minute time period
 - 26 set aside for non-agenda concerns. Each speaker will be allowed to speak for
 - 27 up to 3 minutes. That time may be extended upon vote of the body.
 - 28 ○ To be recognized to address Council on an agenda item, speakers should raise
 - 29 their hand, & provide names, address & whether or not they are citizens.
 - 30 ○ All speakers will conduct themselves in a civil & respectful manner at all times,
 - 31 particularly refraining from interruptions of speaking persons.
 - 32 ○ Public speakers will address the presiding officer, not staff or the audience.
 - 33 ○ Speakers will refrain from using obscene language, “fighting words” likely to
 - 34 incite violence from the individual(s), or language disruptive to the meeting.
 - 35 ○ Speakers will should not make comments of a personal nature. Name-calling,
 - 36 vulgarity, profanity, shouting, yelling or screaming are disruptive, per se.
- 37 • Consequences for disregard of the rules:
 - 38 ○ The presiding officer will identify the disruptive behavior, warn the speaker &
 - 39 request for the disruptive behavior to stop.
 - 40 ○ If the disruptive behavior continues any member of the body can make a
 - 41 motion to declare the speaker out of order & request removal of the speaker
 - 42 by the Police, if the behavior does not stop immediately.

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44 **Public Notification:** Normal meeting notification.

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46 **Alternatives:**

- 47 • Do not pass resolution.
- 48 • Amend resolution.

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50 **Financial Impact:** None.

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52 **Manager’s Recommendation:** We all believe that the public has the right to express
53 passionate dissenting opinions. Members of the public have the right to be addressed & treated
54 in a civil manner & it is reasonable to expect the same in return. I recommend approval.

55
56 **Attachment(s):** Proposed resolution, application, & site plan.

CITY OF MYRTLE BEACH
COUNTY OF HORRY
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

**A RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A
MEETING ACCESS & DECORUM POLICY
FOR ALL COUNCIL MEETINGS AND
MEETINGS OF CITY BOARDS,
COMMISSIONS AND ADVISORY BOARDS.**

WHEREAS, the City of Myrtle Beach is a significant public corporation organized under the laws of the State of South Carolina operating pursuant to the laws of that State as well as municipal law; and

WHEREAS, in the course of doing business there are often dissenting viewpoints of the policies and actions contemplated by City Council or its Boards, Commissions, and Advisory Boards and passionately debated within the body and by the citizens; and

WHEREAS, the City Council encourages the appropriate and even passionate expression of all points of view; and

WHEREAS, the City Council nonetheless believes that such expressions and the conduct of all persons in a public meeting should be subject to reasonable standards of civility and decorum; and

WHEREAS, the City Council, in its solemn invocation, acknowledges that our community practices shared and enduring values such as varied expressions of faith, performance of civic duty and our respect for all; and

WHEREAS, the City Council, in its solemn invocation, declares that we gather to render our public service in a proper manner, and perform our civic duties in good order.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL THAT THE CITY COUNCIL HEREBY ESTABLISHES THE FOLLOWING FOR PUBLIC DISCOURSE AT CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS AND MEETINGS OF CITY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND ADVISORY BOARDS:

THE NEED FOR RULES OF DECORUM

In support of and respect for an open, fair and informed decision-making process, the City Council and the Administration finds that:

- Civil, respectful and courteous discourse and behavior are conducive to the democratic and harmonious airing of concerns and decision making; and

- 1 • Uncivil discourse, personally abusive language and/or discourteous and
2 inappropriate behavior have a negative impact on the character and
3 productivity of the decision-making process, making reasoned debate difficult
4 to achieve, and consensus or compromise almost unobtainable.
- 5 • In an effort to preserve the intent of open government and maintain a positive
6 environment for citizen input and Council decision-making, the following Rules
7 of Decorum have been established.
- 8 • Compliance with these rules is expected and appreciated by the elected and
9 appointed officials, and the public.
- 10 • The Rules of Decorum have been adopted by City Council, and will be included
11 in the agenda and are subject to be referenced at the beginning of each
12 Council meeting and Council work session by the presiding officer.

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14 **RULES OF DECORUM APPLIED TO MEETINGS OF CITY COUNCIL AND ITS BOARDS AND**
15 **COMMISSIONS, AS APPLICABLE.**
16

- 17 • The Mayor serves as the presiding officer of the Council, the Mayor Pro Tem
18 serves in the Mayor's absence. The Presiding Officer of the various boards and
19 Commission serve in like manner.
- 20 • All persons may address City Council on a matter of public concern which is not
21 on the agenda by signing in to address City Council using procedures outlined
22 for Council meetings and Council work sessions.
- 23 • In order to be recognized to address Council on a matter not on the agenda,
24 speakers must provide their name, address and whether or not they are
25 citizens of the City of Myrtle Beach, and the topic of their non-agenda concern.
- 26 • Citizens of the City of Myrtle Beach are afforded an opportunity to address
27 Council before non-citizens in the 30-minute time period set aside for non-
28 agenda concerns.
- 29 • In an effort to accommodate all who wish to address Council at a Council
30 meeting while preserving a reasonable and efficient meeting schedule, each
31 speaker will have a specified amount of time to deliver comments. Speaker will
32 be allowed to speak for up to 3 minutes. That time may be extended upon
33 motion and second, and vote of the body.
- 34 • The speaker will be timed by the City Clerk or designee; please pay attention
35 to the time clock. Speakers are expected to cease comments immediately upon
36 expiration of time.
- 37 • Because there is a 3-minute time limit for non-agenda public commentary,
38 speakers are encouraged to prepare remarks in advance for submission to the
39 public record. Prepared remarks should be submitted to the clerk prior to the
40 start of the meeting or at the end of their comments. Additional material may
41 be submitted to supplement remarks.
- 42 • In order to be recognized to address Council on an agenda item, speakers
43 should raise their hand, and when addressing Council, provide their name,
44 address and whether or not they are citizens of the City of Myrtle Beach.

- 1 • In the case of agenda item regarding a public hearing such as the granting of a
2 franchise, speakers may only address those matters pertinent to the public
3 hearing.
- 4 • Speakers, ~~whether public, appointed or the public~~, will conduct themselves in
5 a civil and respectful manner at all times, particularly refraining from
6 interruptions of speaking persons, which is disruptive per se.
- 7 • Public speakers will address the presiding officer, not staff or members of the
8 audience.
- 9 • Questions to Council members or City staff will be facilitated, answered or
10 directed to appropriate staff by the presiding officer, in their discretion.
- 11 • Speakers will make an effort to speak clearly into the microphone provided.
12 Speakers will make an effort to speak succinctly.
- 13 • Speakers will refrain from the use of individual City staff names in
14 denunciation. It is appropriate to refer to staff by title and/or department.
- 15 • Speakers will refrain from the use of obscene language, “fighting words” likely
16 to incite violence from the individual(s) to whom the words are addressed, or
17 other language which is disruptive to the orderly and fair progress of discussion
18 at the meeting. Speakers will refrain from making comments of a personal
19 nature regarding others. Name-calling, vulgarity, profanity and obscenity are
20 disruptive per se. Shouting, yelling or screaming are disruptive, per se.
- 21 • Council Work Session or public hearing attendees (audience) will refrain from
22 commenting, shouting, booing, clapping, stomping feet or other inappropriate,
23 boisterous and/or disruptive behavior. Brief clapping is permissible at the end
24 of a speaker’s comments.
- 25 • Council Work Session or public hearing attendees (audience) should refrain
26 from private conversation during meetings.
- 27 • Council Work Session or public hearing attendees (audience) should come and
28 go as necessary from meeting space in the least disruptive manner as possible.
- 29 • No campaign placards, banners, or signs will be permitted in the City Council
30 Chambers or Committee Room. Other signage is permitted except signs which
31 violate the Rules of Decorum or that block the view of other attendees.
- 32 • Exhibits, displays, and visual aids used in connection with presentations to the
33 City Council are permitted. Video presentations requested by citizens as visual
34 aids may not be broadcast over cable television due to technological
35 challenges.

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37 **DISREGARD OF THE RULES**

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39 It is the intent of Council to maintain order and enforce Rules of Decorum for its
40 meetings. Disregard of these rules will be met with the following consequences:

- 41
42 1. The presiding officer will identify the disruptive behavior, warn the speaker
43 and request for the disruptive behavior to stop. In the discretion of and at the
44 direction of the presiding officer, the presiding officer, City Clerk or designee
45 will read the relevant “rules of decorum.”

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2. If the disruptive behavior continues after the initial warning, ^{the} the presiding officer, or any member, can make a motion
 - a. to declare the speaker out of order and disruptive under Section 2-43 ((b) (8) (a) and
 - b. to require removal of the speaker by the Police, if the out of compliance behavior does not stop immediately.
3. If the presiding officer's motion is seconded, and voted affirmatively, the speaker is again warned by the presiding officer, and directed to stand down immediately by the presiding officer. To stand down means to stop immediately the disruptive behavior, vacate the podium if the speaker has been recognized and return to one's seat. If the disruptive person has not been recognized to speak, they must stop the identified behavior immediately, but can remain in the meeting.
4. Should the speaker refuse to stand down, the presiding officer shall forthwith direct the Police to remove the speaker from the meeting.
5. All other municipal or state laws and enforcements will apply.

SIGNED AND SEALED this ____ day of _____ 2018.

ATTEST:

BRENDA BETHUNE, MAYOR

JOAN GROVE, CITY CLERK