



# Transparency in Communication Ordinance

Informational Meeting: June 18, 2019

# Integrity of the Meeting & Public Input.

- ▶ Ordinance silent on use of electronic communication devices by council members.
- ▶ Revised the public input policy one year ago.
- ▶ Public has structured opportunity to address the council.
- ▶ Council has structured opportunity to debate/discuss agenda items. (§ 30.016 RULES OF DEBATE: (a) City council debate may occur only after a motion has been made and seconded).
- ▶ Electronic communication during council meetings from the public is public input; allowing for unfettered access to council members throughout an entire meeting. This must be addressed!



# Integrity of the Meeting & Public Input.

- ▶ Ensure that all citizens have equal access to their elected officials at city council meetings, and we are following the public input ordinance.
- ▶ Issue to be addressed: texting, emailing and other forms of electronic correspondence.
  - ▶ Correspondence from citizens, staff, and between councilors.
  - ▶ Practice of conducting personal business during council meetings.
- ▶ Impact of electronic communication on the public meeting process.



# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ▶ Is the unrestricted use of electronic correspondence during official city council meetings:
  - ▶ APPROPRIATE
  - ▶ ETHICAL
  - ▶ LEGAL

# Meeting Decorum

## § 34.002: ETHICS PREAMBLE

The stability and proper operation of democratic representative government depends upon the continuing consent of the governed, upon the public confidence in the integrity of the government and upon responsible exercise of the trust conferred by the people. Government decisions and policy must be made and implemented through proper channels and processes of the governmental structure.



# Meeting Decorum

## § 34.002: ETHICS PREAMBLE

The purpose of this code is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for city council members. City council members must act in a manner that maintains their integrity and independence, yet is responsive to the interests and needs of those they represent. City council members must act in a fair and impartial manner. City council members must be aware of their obligation to conform their behavior to standards of ethical conduct that warrant the trust of their constituents.



## **§ 34.005 CANON THREE.**

(a) A city council member should avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in all his or her activities.

## **§ 34.006: CANON FOUR**

(b) City council members should, while performing the duties of the office as prescribed by law, give precedence to these duties over other activities.



## § 34.007 CANON FIVE.

(a) A city council member should conduct the affairs of the city council in an open and public manner.

(b) City council members should be aware of the letter and intent of the state's open meetings law, should conduct the affairs of the city council consistent with the letter and spirit of that law and consistent with the need to inspire and maintain public confidence in the integrity and fairness of city government and the office of city council member. Consistent with this goal of preserving public trust, city council members should be aware of the need for discretion in deliberations involving resources of the city, the reputation of people and the integrity of the governmental processes.





# Robert's Rules of Order

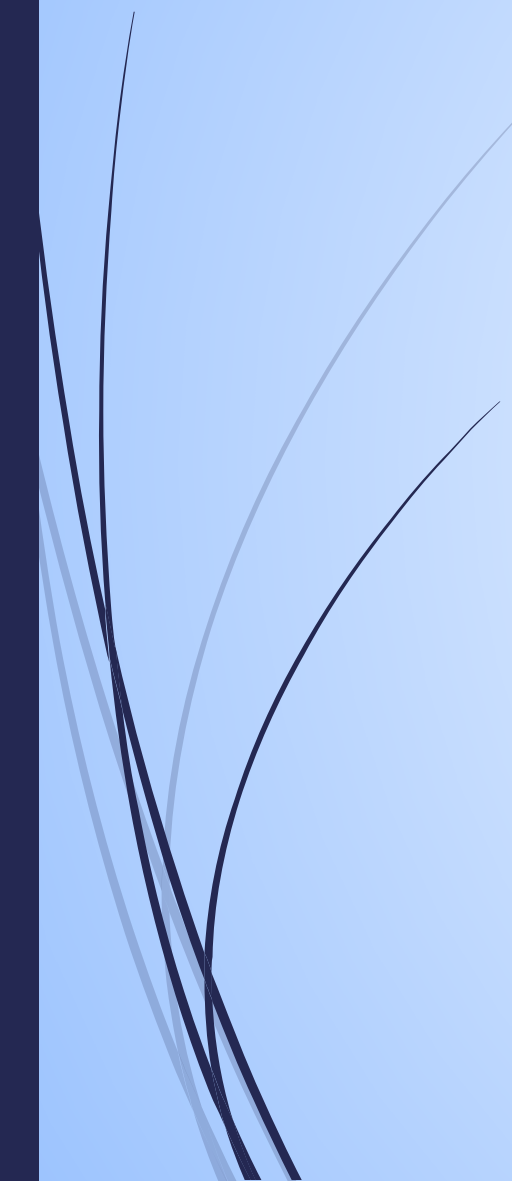
§ 30.012 RULES OF ORDER.

*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (latest edition) shall govern the proceedings of the council in all cases, unless they are in conflict with this subchapter.

- ▶ Public Input (§ 30.015(a))
- ▶ Council Debate/Discussion (§ 30.016(a))



# An opportunity to come together...

- ▶ Public Input & Constituent Correspondence.
  - ▶ Discussion/Debate
  - ▶ Conducting personal/private business during official meetings.
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QUESTIONS?