



Eileen M. Donoghue
City Manager
Michael McGovern
Assistant City Manager

May 18, 2018

Mayor William Samaras
and
Members of the City Council

Re: Proposed Rules Changes

Dear Mayor Samaras and Members of the City Council

Attached is a proposed Amendment to the Rules of the City Council relative to public participation at council meetings and the creation of a free speech zone to be located on the grounds of City Hall.

I would request pursuant to Rule 33 that the proposed amendment be placed on next week's Agenda for a formal vote of the Council. I would also request that the Rules Sub-Committee schedule a meeting so that the administration can present other suggested changes.

Very truly yours,

Eileen M. Donoghue
City Manager

Encl.

Motion/2018

cc: Christine P. O'Connor, City Solicitor

RULE 26 - MEETINGS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

At any meeting open to the public, citizens and employees of the City, and business owners or counsel who represents each group shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard in regard to any matter on the agenda, subject to the following regulations; any person desiring to be heard shall register his or her name and address and the matter, upon which he or she desires to be heard with the City Clerk in a book to be provided therefore no later than 6:30 o'clock on the evening of the meeting. Such person shall speak on the matter on which he or she has registered and shall keep all comments germane to that issue. Such person shall speak for not more than five minutes and shall be subject to Rule #9, with respect to the preservation of decorum and order. In addition, people may register by telephone prior to the closing of the City Clerk's Office as well as by mail by giving their names and addresses and the matter on the Agenda they desire to speak on. As far as possible and within the above limits, the Chair shall allow equal time to both sides of the question. *(G.L. Ch 43, Sec 98A Plan E as amended)*

Persons who do not reside within the City or who are not employees of the City and business owners or counsel who represent each group will not be permitted to speak unless they are endorsed by a member of the City Council and providing that a majority of the City Council does not object.

Where the public interest requires, any matter may be laid over for hearing from a regular or special meeting of the City Council to a meeting of the committee of the whole.

RULE 26 - MEETINGS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC shall be amended to include the following language:

No person shall be permitted to speak, testify or otherwise participate in any council meeting, hearing, or working session unless permitted to do so by the presiding officer or committee chair. Members of the public are welcome in the gallery of the Council Chamber when the council is in session. No demonstration of approval or disapproval from members of the public will be permitted (including, but not limited to signs, placards, banners, cheering, clapping, booing, etc.) and if such demonstrations are made, the gallery or public seating area will be cleared.

Further, there shall be an established Free Speech Zone, to be located on the grounds of City Hall. The areas, as designated by the Superintendent of Police, shall be clearly marked with signage and boundary markers. Once established the Free Speech Zone shall also be designated on a map and permanently posted on the City Clerk's Notice Board as well as electronically on the City of Lowell web page.