



Lowell City Council

Rules SC Minutes

Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Date: September 17, 2019
Time: 5:00 PM
Location: City Council Chamber
375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA

PRESENT:

Present on Roll Call were Chairman Elliott, C. Conway and C. Mercier. Also present was Asst. City Solicitor Rachel Brown.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Chairman Elliott called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM in the Council Chamber. Chairman Elliott noted motions that had been referred to the subcommittee.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

C. Elliott commented on prior protest staged in the Council Chamber and the need to have a policy to govern such activity. C. Elliott noted matter was referred to Law Department and requested update regarding forming a policy. C. Elliott commented on the use of signs in the Chamber as well as designating areas of speech. C. Elliott noted there can be expression without interrupting the body. C. Mercier noted people have the right to protest but there a place for it and that is not in the Council Chamber. C. Conway questioned the manner used by the State House and their Chamber noting that everyone has the right to speak but they must follow decorum. C. Conway commented that there should be freedom of expression and that law should be followed regarding use of signs and acceptable behavior in the Chamber. Atty. Brown noted the current process allowing members of the public to speak before the body and that everyone is given an opportunity. Atty. Brown noted prior recommendation of the City Solicitor which added language to existing Rule 26. Atty. Brown noted it may be better approach to outline areas in which can protest and in regards to signage regulations can be established in conjunction with the recognition of freedom of expression. C. Elliott noted that signage is difficult to regulate and better approach may be to ban them in the Chamber. C. Conway noted other communities may have established regulations that have withstood challenge and perhaps they could be used in the City. **Motion** by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Conway to request Law Department bring forward recommendation before the Council regarding protesting location and signage in City Hall. Adopted per Roll Call vote 3 yeas. So voted.



Second item regarding placement of motions on the Council agenda was introduced by C. Elliott. C. Conway commented on giving motions more time and attention to discuss by moving them from end of agenda. C. Mercier commented on items and how they are placed on the agenda and also noted possible placements on the agenda. C. Elliott commented on types of motions being placed on the agenda and where they should be placed. C. Conway noted it should be moved to a position where it would garner more attention. C. Mercier noted the ability to suspend rules to shift items on the agenda. **Motion** by C. Conway, seconded by C. Mercier to refer matter back to City Council as a whole to discuss moving and placement of motions on the City Council agenda and solicit input from the City Manager regarding same. So voted.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion "To Adjourn" by C. Conway, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted. Meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM.

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk
