

## City of Highland Park

### Rules Governing Public Meetings and Public Comment

In accordance with Section 30.100 of the City Code of the City of Highland Park, the City Council has, by Resolution duly adopted on January 16, 2024, approved the following procedures, which supplement and are in addition to those set forth in Article II of the City Code:

#### I. Committee of the Whole of the City Council

The Committee of the Whole is a subcommittee of the City Council and is intended to be a forum for the Mayor and Council members to informally discuss items that may be considered for formal action at a future meeting of the City Council. All meetings of the Committee of the Whole are open to the public. Items that are listed on the agenda for the Committee of the Whole may include presentations by staff and other who have been invited to address the Committee. Members of the public are welcome to observe the committee meeting, but there will be no opportunity to speak or present at the committee meeting unless invited to do so by the Mayor, as the presiding officer of the meeting. Members of the public are welcome to address the Mayor and City Council during the “Business from the Public” portion of any City Council meeting.

#### II. Business from the Public (Public Comment Time)

A. Overview:

#### III. Authority

These rules concerning public comment and participation (“**Rules**”) are adopted pursuant to Section 2.06 (g) of the Illinois Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120 (“**OMA**”), and are intended to provide an opportunity for members of the public to address public officials during a public meeting (“**Public Comment Time**”). At meetings of the City Council, Public Comment Time occurs under the agenda item labeled “**Business from the Public**”

#### IV. Applicability

These Rules apply to meetings of the City Council as well as any subsidiary public body of the City to which the OMA is applicable (collectively, “**Public Bodies**”). These Rules supersede any rules governing public comment at public meetings previously adopted by the applicable Public Body. These Rules are not intended to govern “public hearings” of Public Bodies.

#### V. Intent

a. Public Comment Time is intended to allow members of the public to address the Public Body only on a topic that is germane to matters within the specific purview and jurisdiction of the Public Body.

- b. Unlike a “public hearing,” at which testimony is presented under oath and may be subject to examination by, and dialogue with, public officials and others in attendance, Public Comment Time is strictly limited to comments made by a speaker to the Public Body. Public Comment Time is not intended to be a forum for open dialogue or engagement. The Public Body is under no obligation to respond to any public comment, or engage with any speaker, during the public meeting. The Presiding Officer may direct the City Manager or other City staff to respond to questions or issues raised in a public comment at an appropriate time after the public meeting.

B. Governing Rules:

1. Public Comment Required

- a. Except as expressly provided in these Rules, the agenda of every regular and special meeting of all Public Bodies must include a reservation of time during the meeting for Public Comment Time.

When a regular meeting of the City Council and Committee of the Whole are scheduled for, and occur on, the same night, the Public Comment Time will occur only during the City Council meeting. Nothing in these Rules prevents the Presiding Officer from accepting public comment during the Committee of the Whole meeting.

- b. Subject to these Rules, the Presiding Officer will recognize any person desiring to speak during Public Comment Time.
- c. Public Comment Time is reserved for comments on matters that are not the subject of a specific agenda item at the same meeting. If a person desires to speak during Public Comment Time about a matter that is the subject of a specific agenda item at the same meeting, public comment will be allowed at the discretion of the Presiding Officer during that agenda item. If no public comment will be allowed during the specific agenda item, then the person must be allowed to speak about the matter during Public Comment Time, subject to these Rules. If the specific agenda item is listed under the “Omnibus Vote Consideration/Consent” portion of the Agenda, the item will, upon request by any member of the public, be removed from that portion of the agenda, and considered separately at that same meeting.
- d. Unless the meeting is a remote meeting in accordance with the provisions of the OMA, any person desiring to make a public comment must do so in person at the location at which the public meeting is taking place. As provided in Section B.6 of these Rules, written comments may be submitted to the Public Body, but written comments will not be read aloud during Public Comment Time.

2. Time Allotted

- a. The maximum amount of time allocated for Public Comment Time at any meeting is 30 minutes, unless determined otherwise by the Presiding Officer prior to the commencement of Public Comment Time.

In the event that all persons desiring to speak during the Public Comment Time are not able to do so within the time limit allowed, the Presiding Officer may either extend the time allocated for Public Comment Time, or allow for continuation of Public Comment Time after the completion of all other matters on the agenda. If the Presiding Officer decides to extend the time allocated for Public Comment Time or allows for its continuation after other matters on the agenda, that decision may be overruled by a majority vote of the members of the Public Body present at the meeting.

- b. No speaker may speak during the Public Comment Time for more than three minutes, unless the Presiding Officer designates a longer time period for that meeting, which designation must occur prior to the commencement of Public Comment Time on the agenda and must be applicable to all persons making comments during Public Comment Time at that public meeting.
- c. A speaker that is representing, or speaking on behalf of, an individual, group, or association will not be allocated additional time regardless of whether they are speaking for or on behalf of multiple people.
- d. A speaker may not yield time to another speaker.

3. Speaker Guidelines and Requirements

- a. Each speaker must state their name in a clear manner so that it can be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- b. Speakers will not be required to state their home address; however, the Presiding Officer may ask the speaker to state whether or not they are a resident of the City.
- c. If a speaker is representing, or speaking on behalf of, an individual, group, or association, the speaker must disclose that representation.
- d. In the interest of promoting the efficient conduct of public business, speakers should refrain from repeating their own comments and comments that have previously been provided to the Public Body by other speakers.
- e. All public comments must be directed to the Presiding Officer and the members of the Public Body, and not to any member of the audience or City staff.
- f. All speakers should be respectful of the Public Body and the audience members, and should be courteous, polite, and civil.
- g. No speaker may engage in conduct or speech that is imminently threatening to any person, that incites violence, or that is obscene.
- h. No speaker may engage in conduct that is disorderly and that disrupts or interferes with the ability of the Public Body to conduct the public meeting.
- i. As provided in Section II.3.a of these Rules, a speaker may speak only on a topic

that is germane to matters within the specific purview and jurisdiction of the Public Body

4. Public Comment Procedure

- a. All persons intending to speak during Public Comment Time must sign up on the City's written sign up form supplied in the meeting room, and deliver that form to the City Manager prior to the commencement of Public Comment Time on the agenda.
- b. The Presiding Officer may allow City residents to speak before all other persons desiring to speak; provided that City residents are subject to the same time limitations and time period restrictions as all other persons desiring to speak.
- c. The speaker must speak only from the podium designated for public speaking in the City Council Chambers.

5. Enforcement by the Presiding Officer

- a. The Presiding Officer has the authority and the direction to strictly enforce these Rules, and to do so in a fair and consistent manner.
- b. The Presiding Officer may interrupt a speaker in order to enforce these Rules, and may limit the comments or take the floor from any speaker who the Presiding Officer determines is violating these Rules.
- c. Any person that the Presiding Officer determines is violating any of these Rules may be required to terminate their comments and vacate the podium or be subject to other action as deemed necessary by the Presiding Officer. Additionally, the Presiding Officer or a majority of the members of the Public Body may require that person to leave the premises of the meeting.

6. Written submissions

- a. Any person has the right to provide written comments to any Public Body or any other City official by addressing those comments to:

City of Highland Park  
1707 St. Johns Avenue  
Highland Park, IL 6035  
Attention: City Manager

and delivering the comments via any of the following methods:

- i. by personal delivery at the front desk of City Hall between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday;
- ii. by mail, courier, or any similar delivery service; or

- iii. by email to [cityhp@cityhpil.com](mailto:cityhp@cityhpil.com) or other email as designated by the City.
- b. All written submissions received for the Public Body will be provided to the members of the Public Body. The Presiding Officer may, in the Presiding Officer's sole discretion, elect to read aloud any written comment received by the Public Body during a Public Comment Time of a public meeting, but has no obligation to do so.

### **III. Omnibus Vote Consideration**

In accordance with Section 40-40 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/3.1-40-40), the City Council may take a single vote by "ayes" and "nays" on the several questions of passage of any two or more orders, ordinances, resolutions, proclamations, or motions placed together for voting purposes in a single group. In such event, the ayes and nays on such matters shall be entered in the minutes as the ayes and nays for each order, ordinance, resolution, proclamation or motion included in the roll call. The question of the passage or failure of each order, ordinance, resolution, proclamation or motion shall be determined individually by the number of votes cast. Such matters may be listed together on any agenda under the title "Omnibus Vote Consideration" or "Consent Agenda." Upon the request of any Council member or any member of the public present at the meeting, a matter will be removed from the Omnibus Agenda and considered at the same meeting immediately following final action on the remainder of the Omnibus Agenda, or to such other location on the agenda deemed appropriate by the Presiding Officer.