



City of Kannapolis Public Hearing and Public Comments Policy

A. Overview.

North Carolina General Statutes § 160A-81 and § 160A-81.1 allow City Council to adopt reasonable rules which govern the conduct of public hearings and public comment periods, including rules to maintain order and decorum. The Kannapolis City Council encourages all citizens to participate in the public process and values their input, ideas, and suggestions. The Kannapolis City Council is resolved to be fair and equitable to all citizens and to maintain order and decorum during the conduct of public meetings. For these reasons, the Kannapolis City Council establishes this policy to maintain order and respectability during the public comment period and during public hearings. These rules are not intended to limit the content of any speaker's message, but to ensure that the meeting is conducted in a civil, productive, effective, and orderly manner. This policy does not place limitations as to who may or may not address City Council.

B. Public Hearings.

From time-to-time City Council will hold public hearings, either as required by law or on its own initiative. They may be held at any scheduled City Council meeting. All comments to City Council during public hearings shall be subject to the standards described in Section D below.

C. Public Comment Period.

The public comment period shall be reserved as an item of business on the agenda for the City Council's regular session, which is currently held on the 4th Monday of each month. All comments to City Council during the public comment period shall be subject to the standards described in Section D below.

D. Standards.


1. Speakers are encouraged to be courteous and respectful of one another and of City Council and City Staff. Speakers are asked to refrain from personal attacks, accusations, or threats directed toward the Mayor, any member of City Council, City Staff, and/or members of the public; vulgar or profane language or gestures will not be tolerated.
2. Prior to the start of the Council Meetings, individuals wishing to address the Council must fill out a speaker's card stationed by the meeting room door. The City Clerk will collect the cards, and the Mayor will recognize speakers in the order that they received. Speakers will address City Council from the podium and will be asked to provide their name and address for the record. The primary purpose of the speaker's card is to assist staff with record keeping. At the beginning of the meeting the Mayor will invite those attendees wanting to speak at a public hearing or during the public comments period to complete a speaker's card. This invitation will

be repeated at the beginning of each public hearing and the beginning of the public comment part of the agenda. A card must be completed and provided to the City Clerk prior to the last speaker completing his or her remarks. There will be no other speakers allowed after this time and no additional invitations made by the Mayor.

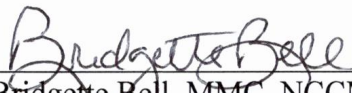
3. To be valid, the speaker's card will include the signature of speaker acknowledging that a copy of this policy has been provided to the speaker either at the date and time of the meeting or on a previous date.
4. Each speaker shall be limited to a maximum time of four (4) minutes. A timer for public speakers will be coordinated by City Staff person which will indicate time remaining and announce when the speakers time has expired. Speakers will be allowed to speak once during the public comment period.
5. A speaker may not share, relinquish, yield or transfer any remaining time they have not used to another speaker. There will be no speaker substitutions allowed.
6. To avoid repetition and delay, groups of people supporting the same position are encouraged to designate a spokesperson for the group.
7. Speakers shall address City Council only on issues that are related to the jurisdiction of the City Council. More specifically, speakers participating in a public hearing shall only address City Council on the issues pertaining to that particular public hearing topic.
8. Speakers must address the Mayor and City Council and refrain from addressing attendees in the audience.
9. Speakers will not discuss matters regarding the candidacy of any person seeking public office, including the candidacy of the person addressing the Council.
10. Signs no larger than two square feet are permitted to be used by the speaker provided they do not block the view of attendees seated in the audience, City Staff, or members of City Council. Signs shall not be shaken, waved or moved vigorously to disrupt the meeting.
11. Speakers may provide documents or other printed comments or materials to City Council, provided there are 10 copies given to the City Clerk prior to the start of the meeting. The City Clerk shall distribute the copies to City Council, Attorney, and City Manager and retain one copy for the record. Any videos, PowerPoint presentations, or other electronic media must be provided to the Clerk no later than four (4) working days before the meeting. Written comments or letters, to include persons not present, will not be read aloud without prior approval from the Mayor. The Mayor has the discretion to deviate from this general rule should he or she deem it necessary.
12. Public hearings and the public comment period are not intended to require City Council to answer impromptu questions or to participate in a discussion or debate with Speakers. City Council will not typically act on an item presented during the public comment period. When the Council deems appropriate, the Mayor may request the City Manager or his/her designee to follow up with the Speaker and/or to provide additional information to City Council later.

13. To provide for the maintenance of order and decorum in the conduct of the meeting, the Mayor may declare “out-of-order” any person who fails to comply with this policy. The Mayor shall caution any such person to abide by the provisions of this policy. Refusal to do so shall be grounds for removal of the speaker from the meeting. Disruption from the audience relating to the support or non- support of a speaker’s comments will not be permitted.
14. The Mayor has the authority to enforce this policy. Failure to obey these standards may result in a forfeiture of any remaining speaking time.
15. Individuals who engage in egregious or repeated violations may be asked to leave the meeting. The Mayor may remove any person from a meeting if the person is interrupting or disrupting the meeting. A person who willfully interrupts, disturbs, or disrupts an official meeting and who, upon being directed to leave the meeting by the presiding officer, willfully refuses to leave the meeting he or she may be charged with a Class 2 misdemeanor under N.C.G.S. 143-318.17.
16. The City’s Chief of Police or his/her designee shall serve as the Sergeant at-Arms for all City Council Meetings and when directed by the Mayor, the Sergeant-at-Arms will have the responsibility of removing a public participant whom the presiding officer determines to be disturbing or interrupting a City Council Meeting.
17. Speakers in need of interpreters or other special accommodations must contact the Human Resource office at least one week in advance of the meeting. Reasonable accommodations will be provided free of charge.

This Policy is adopted this 12th day of August 2024.


Milton D. Hinnant, Mayor

ATTEST:


Bridgette Bell, MMC, NCCMC
City Clerk