



CITY OF FORT BRAGG

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COUNCIL COMMITTEE ITEM SUMMARY REPORT

MEETING DATE: JANUARY 11, 2023
TO: FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
FROM: CRISTAL MUNOZ, ADMINISTRATIVE ANALYST
AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Receive Report on Policy regarding Public Comments during City Council and Other Public Meetings

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW:

In accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act, every public meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission will provide the public an opportunity to address the City Council and Planning Commission on matters on the agenda and non-agenda items but within the City Council's and Planning Commission's subject matter jurisdiction.

Public Comment guidelines have not been formalized into a City Policy until now. The public can speak about anything within the jurisdiction of the City Council and Planning Commission, but the legislative body generally cannot act on or discuss an item, not on the agenda, pursuant to the Brown Act.

The Brown Act also protects the public's right to attend, observe, and participate in meetings. Members of the public who wish to make a comment to the City Council or Planning Commission can do so. This Policy will also establish guidelines for members of the public that submit written or printed comments. In either circumstance, comments must be presented in a polite, professional manner. While the Brown Act permits public comments, it provides no immunity for defamatory statements against City staff.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Committee approve this Policy. Public comments are for the public to provide their views to City Council and Planning Commission, providing a way for the public to participate and express their views directly to the decision-makers. This policy will eliminate grandstanding and streamline the process to ensure the City's ability to get business done efficiently and smoothly.

Written comments will be forwarded to the City Council and Planning Commission immediately upon receipt by the City. All comments received for any public meeting will be published with the final agenda the following day. This will help alleviate the time-consuming process of republishing that agenda after each comment is received.

ALTERNATIVES:

Provide alternative direction to staff regarding policy.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Administrative Regulation on Public Comments