



AGENCY: City Council
MEETING DATE: 01/23/2023
DEPARTMENT: Administration
PRESENTED BY: C. Munoz
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AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

TITLE:

Receive Report and Consider Approval of Policy Regarding Public Comments During City Council and Other Public Meetings

ISSUE:

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 that is 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 and professional manner. While the Brown Act permits public comments, it provides no immunity for defamatory statements against City staff.

ANALYSIS:

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.

This Public Comment policy was presented to the Finance and Administration Committee who provided reasonable feedback on this policy. Written comments will always be forwarded to the City Council and Planning Commission immediately upon receipt by the City. Additionally, all public comments received by 2 PM on the date of the meeting will be stored in a separate electronic file which may be viewed online before the public meeting. 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve the City of Fort Bragg Policy on Public Comments.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Provide alternative direction to staff regarding policy.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACT:

None.

CONSISTENCY:

None.

IMPLEMENTATION/TIMEFRAMES:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Administrative Regulation on Public Comments.

NOTIFICATION:

"Notify Me" subscriber list.