



**Sherman Oaks
Neighborhood Council**

Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council (shermanoaksnc.org)

President Lindsay Imber

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July 12, 2023

Councilmember Nithya Raman
Council District 4
City of Los Angeles

Attendance / Quorum / Public Comment at City Council

To Councilmember Nithya Raman,

The Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council at its July 10, 2023 meeting adopted the following letter requesting a City Council motion to address issues of attendance, quorum and public comment during meetings.

The Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council (SONC) respectfully petitions the Office of Council District 4 (Nithya Raman) to file a motion amending the following numbered points related to the City Council's administration of its scheduled public meetings under the California Brown Act and its rules, with an emphasis on agenda and non-agenda vocalization and communications during public comment periods, and to develop and define Councilmembers duties and participation of its instant proceedings

Whereas the purpose of the Los Angeles City Council is to assist, convey and execute the best interests of any stakeholder and the public at large; it is imperative that Council take immediate action to ensure adequate time, resources and diligence are applied in admitting public comment during Council and all other types of meetings and hearings.

We ask that The Los Angeles City Council take into consideration the following recommendations, which are attached on the following pages:

Thank you for your attention. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Imber
President
Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council
lindsay.imber.sonc@gmail.com

Documents attached to this letter.

The Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council asks that The Los Angeles City Council take into consideration the following recommendations:

1. Amend Council Rule *Chapter II. section 7 to include language that requires council to allow any and all members of the public who wish to speak time to do so; public comment period shall continue until the speaker list is exhausted;
2. Limit time spent during regularly scheduled meetings on demonstrations and/or presentations that aren't directly related to action items in said meeting (e.g. presentation of awards, staff and member recognition, holiday acknowledgements, etc.) to a cumulative total of fifteen minutes in a single meeting; excluding adjourning motions;
3. Confirm Council Rules in **Chapter IV sections 25-29 regarding quorum, affirm that they apply to all portions of Council Meetings including and especially public comment on agenda and non-agenda items. Request that the Council President enforce quorum at all times, including and especially during public comment period(s);
4. Delineate the Council Chamber perimeter as to quorum and to be present;
5. Maintain free public comment telephonic remote option for all public meetings and hearings; and,
6. Members of the public shall be entitled to comment on all agenda items for which votes have not been held during public comment on agenda items in regularly scheduled City Council Meetings; regardless of whether public comment was heard during committee, public hearing, etc. [i.e. members of the public should be entitled to use the entirety of their time during general public comment on items outside of the active meeting's agenda.].

Lastly to request the Chief Legislative Analyst, with assistance from the Office of the City Administrative Officer (CAO) and in consultation with the City Attorney, to report on a draft and annual costs associated with amending the Rules of the Los Angeles City Council, Charter or other law as stated above within 60 days.

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Appendix of Cited Codes and Works

**Chapter II Section 7

General Public Comment

During each regular meeting, the Council shall provide a member of the public the opportunity to address the Council on any issue within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Council. This shall be referred to as "General Public Comment," which generally

shall be taken up at or near the beginning of each regular meeting. Unlike most governing bodies which meet once a week or less often, the Council has regular meetings three times each week which afford members of the public frequent opportunity to address the Council. Therefore, each speaker shall be limited to one minute of general public comment each regular meeting. The Council shall not discuss or take action relative to any general public comment unless authorized by Section 54954.2(b) of the Government Code. The Council has determined that a cumulative total of ten minutes is a reasonable minimum amount of time for the General Public Comment segment of each regular meeting.

Agenda Item Public Comment

The Council shall provide an opportunity for the public to address the Council on each agenda item before or during Council's consideration of the item, unless the opportunity for public comment on the item previously was provided by a Council Committee and the item has not changed substantially since that Committee's consideration of the item. A member of the public wishing to speak on only one agenda item that is eligible for public comment shall be given an opportunity to speak for up to one minute when that item is considered by Council, or, at the discretion of the Presiding Officer, before consideration of the item. A member of the public wishing to speak on more than one agenda item at a single meeting shall combine and present his or her comments addressing the agenda items at or near the beginning of the meeting during a segment called "Multiple Agenda Item Comment." A member of the public speaking on more than one agenda item shall be allowed to speak for up to one minute per item up to a total of three minutes per meeting. This will be the only opportunity to speak, other than during General Public Comment, for those members of the public who have submitted speaker cards on more than one agenda item. The Council has determined that a cumulative total of 20 minutes is a reasonable minimum amount of time for the Multiple Agenda Item segment of each regular meeting. On each meeting agenda, the Clerk shall designate any agenda items that are linked by a common specific issue. The Presiding Officer may allow members of the public who submit speaker cards on linked agenda items to make their public comment when the items are considered by Council

** Chapter IV 25-29

25. Ten members of the Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but a smaller number may adjourn from time to time until a quorum is present and may compel the attendance of the absentees. Except as otherwise required by the Charter or other law, or by these rules where not inconsistent therewith, action by the Council shall be taken by a majority vote of the entire membership of the Council.

26. Whenever a member questions the presence of a quorum, the Presiding Officer shall direct the Clerk to call the roll and announce the result. There shall be no debate. Every member present must respond when his or her name is called.

27. No member shall be considered present unless the member is within the Council Chamber.

28. No member shall leave a Council meeting without permission from the Presiding Officer of the meeting. Once permission has been granted, and upon direction by the Presiding Officer, the City Clerk shall remove said member's name from Council's computerized recordkeeping system.

29. Upon a call of the Council, if supported by a majority of the members present, whether quorum or not, the Presiding Officer shall have the power to send the Sergeant-at-Arms with a written order to bring the absent Councilmember forthwith before the Council.