

RESOLUTION 2018-76

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT A PUBLIC MEETING CODE OF CONDUCT

WHEREAS, the City of Franklin, Tennessee, prides itself on being an inclusive, open, respectful, and welcoming community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Franklin, Tennessee, strives to be a place where all are empowered to participate in the democratic process; and

WHEREAS, basic rules of fairness and conduct enable all to engage in public meetings.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Franklin, Tennessee, that:

The attached Public Meeting Code of Conduct shall be adopted and provide guidance to all who participate in public meetings in the City of Franklin.

IT IS SO RESOLVED AND DONE on this _____ day of _____, 2018.

ATTEST:

CITY OF FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE:

By: _____
Eric S. Stuckey
City Administrator

By: _____
Dr. Ken Moore
Mayor

Approved as to Form:

By: _____
Shauna Billingsley
City Attorney



Public Meeting Code of Conduct

The City of Franklin, Tennessee, prides itself on being an inclusive, open, respectful, and welcoming community where the whole story can be told—past, present, and future. Our future as a community depends upon the ever vigilant observation of basic rules of courtesy, respect, and tolerance when engaging in any public discourse. Therefore, the City of Franklin observes the following code of civility for all public meetings:

- 1) **Policy** All citizens are welcome to speak their minds, but should focus on the subject matter of an issue, and never the person. Personal attacks are not acceptable. All have a right to voice their respectful opinion on an issue.
- 2) **Observe** All attendees to a public meeting shall observe all rules of the meeting. These include:
 - a. All public comment will be directed through the chairperson of the meeting.
 - b. Time limits may be established by the chairperson.
 - c. No displays, placards, or signs will be allowed within public meeting chambers other than those necessary to explain a topic of discussion.
 - d. No person shall approach a board or commission without permission of the chairperson.
 - e. The chairperson has the right to stop comment after time has expired or if the commenter has violated these public meeting guidelines and rules of decorum.
 - f. The chairperson has the right to have a commenter removed from the meeting should a violation of this code occur.
- 3) **Listen** Participation in public meetings is a cornerstone expression and function of our democratic process. To be truly successful in participating, one must actively listen. To that end:
 - a. All participants—applicants, citizens, elected officials, and staff—should actively listen to commenters.
 - b. To value all meeting participants' time, we respectfully ask that speakers refrain from overly repetitive messages. If you agree with a prior statement or point, say so and add your new insights to the discussion.
- 4) **Intention** Participants are encouraged to act with intention. All people—applicants, citizens, elected officials, and staff—have one critical thing in common—everyone's time is valuable. When speaking, do so with intention. State your opinion or subject matter of fact plainly and in a straightforward manner. This, as much as anything, demonstrates respect to your fellow participants in democracy.
- 5) **Tolerate** A hallmark of any civil society is toleration of differing opinions, even if you do not agree. The City of Franklin encourages all participants to:

- a. Disagree constructively.
 - b. Never use disparaging or offensive language or antagonize a speaker through clapping, heckling, or other disruptive demonstration.
 - c. Respect differing viewpoints, even if you disagree with them.
 - d. Respect the Board or Commission. Once the public comment period is closed, allow the board or commission members the same courtesy afforded you to speak their mind and collaboratively come to a decision.
- 6) **Educate** No person knows everything—not commenters, decision makers, nor staff. Participation in public discourse is an opportunity to truly educate those involved in building and sustaining our community. This involves not only conveying how you feel about an issue, but also sharing information relevant to the issue. Respectfully use the opportunity to educate boards, commissions, and your neighbors.

This code is designed to maintain and nurture an approachable government for all citizens of our City. The City of Franklin encourages all to remember the words of our namesake, founding father Benjamin Franklin:

“Remember not only to say the right thing in the right place, but far more difficult still, to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.”