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Title: Resolution amending the Rules of Council , Rule VI, subsection c, by inserting guidelines for Public Comment at City Council Regular, Committee and Special Meetings.

Sponsors: Sala Udin, Twanda Carlisle

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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
2/16/2005	1	Committee on Finance & Budget	TABLED	Pass
2/16/2005	1	Committee on Finance & Budget	TABLED	
2/2/2005	1	Committee on Finance & Budget	Held in Committee	Pass
1/25/2005	1	City Council	Read and referred	

Presented by Mr. Hertzberg

Resolution amending the Rules of Council , Rule VI, subsection c, by inserting guidelines for Public Comment at City Council Regular, Committee and Special Meetings.

WHEREAS, the right of the public to address Council at all official Council meetings is rooted in legislation commonly known as the Sunshine Act, and

WHEREAS, the Sunshine Act sets forth that right in the following language, "Municipal government bodies of the Commonwealth shall provide an opportunity for public comment, on legislation pending before that body, at all official meetings," and

WHEREAS, historically, it has been Council's desire to allow for unrestricted public comment, rather than to restrict comment to "legislation pending before that body," and

WHEREAS, the public has almost unlimited access to open, public forums, through the public channel on cable television, through daily and neighborhood newspapers, through public service announcements on radio and television media, through the City of Pittsburgh website, or directly to the public officials through the mail, and

WHEREAS, although Council's intentions were honorable, it is clear that, without some parameters, some members of the public are free to launch personal attacks, self promotion, political campaigns and all manner of comments irrelevant to "legislation pending before that body."

WHEREAS, no profanity, no personal attacks, no irrelevant self promotion and no political campaigns will

henceforth be tolerated by the Chair. Persons who, in the opinion of the Council meeting Chair, are in violation of the spirit or letter of this resolution, will be ordered to discontinue their comments and if they refuse will be disconnected from the audio and visual transmission, and if necessary, the Chair will order the Sergeant of Arms to remove the person from Council Chambers.

Be it resolved by the Council of the City of Pittsburgh hereby as follows:

Section 1. THAT THE RULES OF COUNCIL, RULE VI, SUBSECTION C, WHICH CURRENTLY READS:

c. In compliance with Pennsylvania Act 93 of 1998, opportunity for comment by residents or taxpayers of the City will be provided as the first order of business at any special meetings of Council and at the weekly Standing Committee Meeting and as the second order of business at the weekly Regular Meeting of Council. Comment is limited to matters of concern, official action or deliberation which are or may be before Council, and unless determined otherwise by a majority of Council Members present; is limited to three (3) minutes per individual.

IS HEREBY AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

c. In compliance with Pennsylvania Act 93 of 1998, opportunity for comment by residents or taxpayers of the City will be provided at any special meetings of Council and at the weekly Standing Committee Meeting and Regular Meeting of Council. The content of the public comment period of City Council meetings will be restricted to civil discourse related to legislation pending before City Council, issues related to some branch of City government, or issues related to the well being of the City of Pittsburgh. Comment is limited to three (3) minutes per individual unless determined otherwise by a majority of Council Members present.