

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 2 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE BY
THE ADDITION OF A NEW SECTION 2-32 PERTAINING TO CONDUCT AT
PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Whereas, in order to conduct the necessary business of the City, it is imperative for the governing body to hold orderly meetings where business can be efficiently completed and open discussions had among the legislative officials; and

Whereas, the City Council may enact appropriate restrictions on the time, place and manner of comment and engagement between the public and City Council at such meetings; and

Whereas, it is the policy of the City to conduct public meetings in an open and orderly manner and in an environment safe for all persons in attendance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FERGUSON, MISSOURI, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Chapter 2 of the Municipal Code is hereby amended by the addition of a new Section 2-32 which shall read as follows:

Section 2-32 Conduct at Public Meetings

A. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this section is to establish rules relative to conduct by members of the public attending, the presence and use of signs or other objects and materials, and/or addressing the legislative or policy body at meetings held by the City of Ferguson, including meetings of the City Council, and City Boards, Commissions and Committees. This section is intended to facilitate the conduct of public meetings in an open and orderly manner, in an environment safe for all persons in attendance and in such a manner so as to promote open debate of public policy issues in an atmosphere of fairness, courtesy and respect for differing points of view.

B. SCOPE OF APPLICATION.

This section applies to all persons attending public meetings.

C. REGULATIONS.

1. Public Meeting Decorum:

- a) Persons in the audience will refrain from behavior which will disrupt the public meeting. This will include making loud noises, clapping, shouting, booing, hissing or engaging in any other activity in a manner that disturbs, disrupts or impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting.

- b) Persons in the audience will refrain from creating, provoking or participating in any type of disturbance involving unwelcome physical contact.
- c) Persons in the audience will refrain from using cellular phones while the meeting is in session.
- d) Appropriate attire, including shoes and shirts are required in the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms at all times.
- e) Persons in the audience will not place their feet on the seats in front of them or otherwise block access aisles. Persons will not stand in front of or otherwise block doors and hallways necessary for ingress and egress.
- f) All persons entering the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms, including their bags, purses, briefcases and similar belongings, may be subject to search for weapons and other dangerous materials.
- g) Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

2. Signs, Objects or Symbolic Material:

- a) Objects and symbolic materials, such as signs or banners, will be allowed in the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms, with the following restrictions:
 - 1. No objects will be larger than 18 inches by 18 inches.
 - 2. No sticks, posts, poles or other such items will be attached to the signs or other symbolic materials.
 - 3. The items cannot create a building maintenance problem or a fire or safety hazard.
 - 4. Materials to be utilized by presenters for a scheduled agenda item may exceed size restrictions if necessary for the presentation and upon prior approval of the Chair.
- b) Persons with objects and symbolic materials such as signs must remain seated when displaying them and must not raise the items above shoulder level, obstruct the view or passage of other attendees, or otherwise disturb the business of the meeting.
- c) Objects that are deemed a threat to persons at the meeting or the facility infrastructure are not allowed. City staff is authorized to remove items and/or individuals from the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms if a threat exists or is perceived to exist. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to: firearms (including replicas and antiques), toy guns, explosive material, and ammunition; knives and other edged weapons; illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia; laser pointers, scissors, razors, scalpels, box cutting knives, and other cutting tools; letter openers, corkscrews, can openers with points, knitting needles, and hooks; hairspray, pepper spray, and aerosol containers; tools; glass containers; and large backpacks and suitcases that contain items unrelated to the meeting.

3. Addressing the City Council or Committees:

- a) Persons wishing to address the City Council or Committees on any item other than a matter scheduled for a Public Hearing, please sign in with your name and address at the podium. The sign in sheet will be collected prior to the start of the Council meeting, and names will be read in order for comments.
- b) If you are able, please make your comments from the podium at the front of the

room. If you are unable to do so, you may address the City Council or Committees from your seat; however, please speak loudly so that you can be heard

- c) Provide your name and address at the beginning of your remarks for the formal record.
- d) Meeting attendees are usually given two (2) minutes to speak during the public comments or public hearings sections; the time limit is in the discretion of the Chair of the meeting and may be limited when appropriate. Applicants and appellants in land use matters are usually given more time to speak.
- e) During public hearings the speakers should discuss topics related to the public hearing on the agenda.
- f) Speakers' comments should be addressed to the full body. Requests to engage the Mayor, Council Members, Board or Committee Members, Commissioners or Staff in conversation will not be honored. Obscene language and language that is intended to provoke a hostile or violent reaction will not be tolerated.
- g) Speakers will not bring to the podium any items other than a prepared written statement, writing materials, or objects that relevant to the presentation.
- h) If an individual wishes to submit written information, he or she may give it to the City Clerk or other administrative staff at the meeting.
- i) Speakers and any other members of the public will not approach the dais at any time without prior consent from the Chair of the meeting.

D. Violations of these provisions or other conduct which disturbs, disrupts or impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting may result in removal from the meeting and may be subject to the penalty for ordinance violations set forth in this Code.

Section 2. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after the date of its passage by the City Council.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FERGUSON, MISSOURI, ON THIS
28th DAY OF JUNE, 2016.

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk

