

RESOLUTION 1998-218R  
A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF  
SAN MARCOS, TEXAS ADOPTING POLICIES, GUIDELINES  
AND PROTOCOLS FOR COUNCIL INTERACTION AND  
MEETINGS; AND DECLARING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**RECITALS:**

1. Section 2.043 of the City Code authorizes the Council to adopt rules of common courtesy and procedure by resolution.
2. The City Council wishes to adopt the following policies, guidelines and protocols for Council interaction and meetings.

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN MARCOS, TEXAS:  
PART 1. GUIDING POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS**

**A. Charter Statement of Goals and City Council Mission Statement**

Section 1.03 of the City Charter states "the goals of the city government are to create a strong community, foster a high quality of life, promote neighborhood integrity, support sound community and economic development, conserve and protect the city's natural resources and the environment, and safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the city's residents."

The mission of the City of San Marcos is to assure the residents of the City a sense of *community, safety and neighborhood integrity* by providing necessary municipal services, fiscal responsibility and comprehensive planning for the future. In addition, the City shall promote flexibility in public/private partnerships, sound economic development, intergovernmental cooperation and protection of our natural resources and the environment.

**B. Priorities**

In carrying out this mission, city council members have accepted the responsibility for leading efforts to achieve the following results identified as priorities by the citizens of San Marcos:

1. Develop the City's infrastructure capacity to keep up with the anticipated new growth.
2. Continue the City's long-standing commitment to effective and efficient customer service.
3. Maximize the natural beauty, friendliness and location of the City. Use policies and programs to provide a work-ready workforce. Maintain a healthy and competitive environment for growth in business, industry and tourism. Protect the historic character of the City (including, but not limited to, "historic" neighborhoods and downtown).
4. Promote neighborhood vitality and safety by assisting neighborhood organizations in developing resource projects and public improvements.

**C. Responsibilities**

As the governing body for the City of San Marcos, the city council acknowledges its responsibility to ensure effective and efficient government. In doing so the council agrees to:

1. Act with integrity,
2. Provide sound leadership,
3. Administer its own discipline,
4. Monitor its own progress, and
5. Ensure the continued development of individual council members, as well as the council as a group.

## **Policies, Guidelines And Protocols For Council Interaction And Meetings**

**The following policies will serve to guide the activities and attitudes of the city council.**

### **PART 2. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTION**

In service to the City of San Marcos and in support of ethical, efficient and effective government, city council members adopt the following guidelines.

#### **A. Communication**

1. Demonstrate respect and courtesy for others in all interactions.
2. Listen for understanding and stay open to all points of view.
3. Challenge, with consideration, people's ideas, not the people themselves.
4. Leave egos and personal agendas at the door.
5. Self-monitor and correct negative verbal and non-verbal communication.

#### **B. Knowledge**

1. Be well informed about the public's needs, challenges and resources.
2. Share information about items of mutual interest.
3. Use good judgment in making decisions - no "pressured" decisions.
4. Ask questions to identify the interest behind a stated position.
5. Continually consider the future ramifications of each decision.

#### **C. Efficiency**

1. Make the best and most efficient use of resources.
2. Make and keep time commitments.
3. Study issues carefully prior to group discussion whenever possible.
4. Encourage participation with clearly defined time limits.
5. Emphasize strategic leadership rather than administrative detail.'

#### **D. Effectiveness**

1. Be accountable to the public for accomplishment of stated objectives.
2. Monitor the governing body's processes and performance on an ongoing basis.
3. Retrain and redevelop as needed to insure the continuity of its governance capability.
4. Make collective rather than individual direction and decisions and support those decisions made.
5. Honor institutional commitments, revisiting these decisions only if substantive changes in law, finances or environment require.

### **PART 3. FORM OF GOVERNMENT**

#### **A. Introduction.**

1. Of the 290 home rule cities in the state, nearly 87 percent operate under the council-manager form of government. The basic structure of the council-manager form of government is similar to that of a private corporation where the stockholders elect a board of directors which then hires a president to run the company. Under the council-manager plan, the voters elect a city council, which in turn hires a city manager to administer the city's day-to-day affairs.

## **Policies, Guidelines And Protocols For Council Interaction And Meetings**

- 2 In a council-manager city, as in any other, the city council serves as the legislative body. Under the council-manager plan, the mayor and council members have no administrative duties. These are vested in the city manager, who is responsible for directing the workforce and programs of the city in accordance with ordinances, rules and regulations adopted by the city council.

### **B. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **1. Mayoral Responsibilities.**

The mayor, or in his/her absence, the mayor pro-tern or deputy mayor pro-tern, serves to coordinate and connect all parts of the system of city government to improve interactions and insure clear communication between the city council, city manager, the staff and the public. The mayor is also the community spokesperson in regional, state or national matters. The mayor/mayor pro-tern:

- a. Presides as chairperson for city council meetings;
- b. Establishes and enforces appropriate time limits;
- c. Insures that the council acts according to its own policies and procedures;
- d. Acts as the council's primary spokesperson on decisions made by the council;
- e. Preserves meeting decorum and order;
- f. Encourages dialogue on strategic matters by all council members;
- g. Mediates conflicts that arise or designates a mediator as needed;
- h. Helps orient new council members and encourages ongoing education of existing council members;
- i. Has a vote on agenda items and has a voice in matters requiring council action; and
- k. Works to ensure positive relationships and an effective governing body.

#### **2. Council Responsibilities.**

The city council members act as community trustees and ensure that the long term interests of the San Marcos community are addressed. The council functions as a single voice, and provides a link between city government and the citizens. Council members:

- a. Initiate and review policies based on their shared values-- These policies will reflect the needs of the city of San Marcos;
- b. Establish short and long-term goals;
- c. Have a vote on agenda items;
- d. Recommend agenda items of strategic importance to the City of San Marcos;
- e. Approve and monitor progress made on plans and programs;
- f. Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of city government;
- g. Respond promptly to community as well as city management concerns;
- h. Study issues brought before-the council and be prepared to engage in knowledgeable discussion and cast an informed vote when required;
- i. Make appropriate referrals to city staff regarding citizen inquiries and complaints;
- j. Promote citizens' participation and sense of ownership in the community;
- k. Make collective decisions in the best interest of the citizens of San Marcos;
- l. Adhere to these policies and procedures;
- m. Evaluate their own processes and performance on an ongoing basis; and
- n. Celebrate and communicate successes;

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### **3. -City Manager Responsibilities.**

The City Manager serves as the chief executive officer of the city-and is responsible for the administration of the city's businesses. He/she coordinates the activities of the various departments of the city based on the priorities established by the city council.

The City Manager is the primary link between the city council and the professional staff. The City Manager:

- a. Supervises all municipal employees and programs;
- b. Provides information to the city council to facilitate its ability to make informed decisions in the best interests of the community;
- c. Prepares and submits the annual budget to the city council;
- d. Keeps the city council fully advised of the financial condition and needs of the city;
- e. Processes and approves agenda materials for city council meetings;
- f. Provides staff resources to respond to the needs of the city council;
- g. Makes recommendations to the city council based on his/her knowledge of the needs of the organization and the community;
- h. Participates in city council meetings, but has no vote on matters being considered by the city council; and
- i. Implements the city council's stated ends through appropriate means.

### **PART 4. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS**

- A. During the council meetings, council members shall preserve order and decorum, shall not interrupt or delay proceedings, and shall not refuse to obey the orders of the mayor or the rules of the council.
- B. Council members shall demonstrate respect and courtesy to each other, to city staff members, and to members of the public appearing before the council.
- C. Council members shall refrain from rude and derogatory remarks and shall not belittle staff members, other council members, or members of the public.

### **PART 5. MEETING GUIDELINES**

To ensure consistently productive meetings it is necessary to adopt procedures that give structure and support to the parliamentary procedures used by the council. The following Guidelines will be used to ensure effective, efficient meetings.

#### **A. Pre-Meeting Activities**

1. Agree on a regular meeting schedule, including time, date and place of meetings. Prepare a calendar for the year, or as far in advance as possible and provide information regarding which issues will be discussed/resolved. Post public notice at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.
2. Have prepared an agenda using the same format for all city council meetings. All agenda items to be included should be accompanied by clear, concise, timely, written summaries or fact sheets that show advance preparation and good policy analysis. Summaries should be consistent and include:
  - a. Brief sentence stating the reason for the report (request, etc.);
  - b. Concise statement of the issue or concern;
  - c. Bulleted list of report findings and conclusions;

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- d. Recommendations, including action steps, for the council;
  - e. How recommendations impact on financial status and current policy, long and short-term; and
  - f. Checklist of those people who have reviewed the report and their recommendations (city manager, council members, advisory groups, attorneys, etc.).
3. Distribute to council members a preliminary agenda by fax on the day the agenda is set. Distribute items likely to need considerable council attention one week prior to the council meeting.

### **B. Agenda Packet**

1. Using the agenda request form, staff will communicate all options considered and their recommendations on options being considered by the council
2. Account numbers and account names will be included on agenda request forms.
3. A map will be provided identifying the location of existing mobile homes near the site of request for mobile home SUPs.
4. Back-up materials on subjects to be discussed in executive session will be provided in advance to council.
5. Maps shall be included when applicable.

### **C. Meeting Activities**

1. Call to order. The meeting is called to order at 7:00 p.m. All further activities will be governed by council policies and Robert's Rules of Order.
2. Roll call. A written record of all voting members present at today's meeting.
3. Opening Ceremonies (if any). At the beginning of the meeting, the Mayor and Council issue ceremonial proclamations and awards, then hear citizen comments.
  - a. Proclamations: Citizen and groups may elect to receive proclamations in forums other than council meetings.
  - b. Citizen communications: Persons wishing to address council may register to speak by filling out a speaker's form and noting the item on which they wish to speak. Only citizens who have signed up in advance of an agenda item being discussed will be recognized. To allow maximum participation, citizen comments should be limited to a total speaking time of three minutes per citizen. Written comments may be submitted throughout the meeting. Council will not engage in discussion with citizens during citizen communications. Specific factual information or an explanation of current policy may be made in response to an inquiry, but any discussion or decision must be limited to a proposal to place the item on a future agenda.
4. Review of Mission, Guidelines for Interaction and Citizen Communication Protocols. A copy of the Mission, Guidelines for Interaction and Citizen Communication Protocols will be attached to agenda. This sets the tone for a focused, productive meeting and reminds participants of the meeting ground rules.
5. Review of meeting time frames. As the presiding officer, the mayor will establish preliminary time frames for each agenda item and the meeting in general. These time frames will be shared at the beginning of each meeting and will guide the length of discussion of agenda items.

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6. Council deliberation. The Mayor will encourage council members to participate in council discussion and give members the opportunity to speak (share interests, assumptions, questions) before any member can speak again on the subject.

### **D. Post-Meeting Activities**

1. Information. A Status of Council Action Report will be produced monthly and provided to the council. Council members will assist in identifying items for inclusion in the report.
2. Annually staff will prepare for council an accomplishments list that details major milestones important to the council and community.

PART FIVE. This resolution shall be in full force and effect immediately from and after its passage.

Adopted this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of November 1998 signed by Mayor Billy G. Moore Attested by Janis K Woman, City Secretary