

Subject: Public Hearings and Participation
Policy No.: 000.0003
Effective Date: Revised on 9/14/2015

In accordance with law and policy, the City Council and its Boards frequently conduct Public Hearings on a number of matters and issues. These Public Hearing rules are intended to ensure that the public has the opportunity to participate fairly in the meeting while promoting the orderly, efficient, and effective flow of the meeting.

Rules for Conducting Public Hearings

1. The Presiding Officer shall announce that the Public Hearing on a matter is now open and should call forth those persons who wish to speak in favor, against, or otherwise on the particular issue. The Presiding Officer shall inform the public that all comments by proponents, opponents, or the public shall be made from the podium and that any individual making a comment should first give their name and address. The Presiding Officer shall also inform the public that comments will only be received from the podium.
2. Members of the public who wish to speak must sign up on the form provided prior to the commencement of the Public Hearing. Members of the public are expected to adhere to the rules of decorum outlined herein and in the Civility Code and should be informed of such at the beginning of the Public Hearing by the Presiding Officer. There should be no vocal or boisterous demonstrations which will disrupt the orderly flow of the meeting. Any person(s) engaging in this type of behavior shall be ruled out of order by the Presiding Officer and shall, at the his/her discretion, be removed from the building.
3. Time. Proponents and opponents are allowed fifteen (15) minutes per side to present data, evidence and opinions. Each side's time period may be divided among multiple speakers in whatever manner desired. No petition shall be the subject of more than one (1) public hearing before the City Council or Board regardless of the number of times final action is deferred by the City Council or Board, unless a simple majority of members of the City Council or Board vote to conduct such additional public hearings. Speakers will be called as they appear on the sign up form. Additional time may be allotted for either side at Council/Board's discretion and upon a simple majority of affirmative votes of the Council/Board. Clerk's Note: State Law Mandates the time be at least 10 minutes per side. (O.C.G.A. § 36-66-5)
4. Once the Public Hearing has concluded, the Presiding Officer shall so announce and the Council or Board shall convene into regular session to make its decisions.
5. As a general rule, members of the public do not speak on agenda items unless those items have been advertised for public hearing, or unless the Council or Board, by a simple majority of affirmative votes, has decided that public participation is necessary in its deliberative process. The Council or Board shall follow its Public Hearing rules when such participation is warranted.
6. Public Hearings will be advertised in the newspaper of general circulation (City's Legal Organ), at least 3 days but no more than 45 days prior to the date of the hearing. The only exception to this will be public hearings pertaining to the budget or as otherwise governed by State Law. Budget public hearings are to be advertised as specified in Sec. 2-405 in the Woodstock Code of Ordinances. Charter Amendments require publication in legal organ for 3-consecutive weeks.
7. Any amendment to these rules of order by a Council Member shall be submitted to the Clerk in writing one week before the designated meeting. The proposed amendment shall be included on the agenda for that meeting and distributed to all Council Members. All amendments require a simple majority of affirmative votes by the Council for adoption.
8. Public Hearings are hereby required for petitions for rezonings; variances; annexations; Land Development Ordinance modifications; creation of new fees or amendments to existing fee schedules which constitute an increase; codification of ordinances; adoption of the annual budget; budget amendments that add a new item of appropriation in an amount exceeding one percent of the total amount of appropriations as stated in the initially approved budget, or increases or decreases in any item of appropriation by more than ten percent; setting of the millage rate (ads to be published pursuant to state law guidelines); creation of new utilities; creation of or amendments to franchises; amendments to the occupation tax ordinance; Charter amendments; and other matters as required by State law or at the request of the Mayor and Council.
9. Effective on the date of adoption of this revision, all applicants/petitioners of annexation, zoning, variance or other requests where site plans or large display boards may be needed, must supply City staff with a USB thumb drive or email which contains a digital version of their presentation board(s) and/or site plans so that it can be displayed digitally on the public display screens located in the Chambers at City Center.

PUBLIC HEARING SIGN IN FORM

(This document is a public document subject to the open records act.)



Meeting Date	Agenda Item/Description

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Speakers will be called in the order they appear on the form.

Proponents

Name (Please print)	Address	Email or Phone

Opposition

Name	Address	Email or Phone