



PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE

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To send correspondence to the City Council, on matters listed on the agenda please email PublicComment@losaltosca.gov

From: [Ellen Friedman](#)
To: [City Council](#); [Public Comment](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM 8 - MEETING DATE May 23, 2023
Date: Monday, May 22, 2023 4:35:44 PM

PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM 8 - MEETING DATE May 23, 2023

Thank you for reading this input on Agenda item #8:

Please reconsider adoption of proposed changes to revise Council Norms items 9.1, 10.7 and 11.6 B. Adopting them as proposed will create a substantial barrier to the council getting genuine and fair input from the community and that, in turn, will reduce the effectiveness of the Los Altos City Council.

Instead, there are other ways to improve efficiency and convenience for council process without unfairly blocking public input and participation.

Specifically:

Proposed change 9.1 Posting of Notice and Agenda Rather than the proposed extreme reduction of required minimum advance posting time (from 8 days to 72 hours), why not **chose a smaller time reduction for advanced posting** that is more convenient for the council but allows at least 3 business days in advance to give people reasonable time to read and consider the items on the agenda? For example, the proposed change could be worded **“Posting is to be at least 6 days in advance of the meeting and long enough to be in accordance with State law”**.

Proposed change 10.7 Consent Calendar The proposed change blocks the public from having an item discussed. **This change creates a sense that the council is immune from public concerns and not conducting government in an open way.** If the proposed change is intended to help meetings run more smoothly, there are ways to allow a member of the public to request an item be pulled from consent calendar and discussed while imposing reasonable safeguards against any individual stalling the process through frivolous requests. For example, the proposed change could instead designate that **“A Councilmember or any member of the public with the support of at least two other members of the public may request an item be removed an item from the Consent Calendar.”**

Proposed change 11.6 B Public Comment/ Limit for speakers

Please do not prevent speakers from delegating time to another speaker. This proposed change makes it far less likely to get useful public input, suggesting that the council is not actually interested in the public's concerns. Instead, some version of the original requirement that allows delegation of time to another speaker or to a spokesperson for a group is far more effective and more fair, and in fact could reduce the total time spent listening to the public's input as compared to many short 1-3 minute statements each of which is too short or poorly organized to express the topic or concern in question. Why not use the struck-out text but reduce the total time for any speaker to perhaps 6 minutes instead of 10 minutes to improve efficiency?

Again, thank you for reading and considering this input.

(Dr) Betty Ellen Friedman
1070 Rosemont Ave
Los Altos CA 94024

From: [Deb Skelton](#)
To: [City Council](#); [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Public comment item #9
Date: Monday, May 22, 2023 5:45:32 PM

Dear Los Altos City Council Members,

Thank you for your dedication, and for the work you do for the City of Los Altos. I am writing today to express that I am opposed to the proposed revisions to the current norms, practices and policies for the Los Altos City Council.

Sincerely,
Debbie Skelton
1045 Fremont Ave.
Los Altos, CA 94024

From: [Scott Spielman](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Norms and Procedures - Item 9 of City Council Agenda - 5-23-23
Date: Tuesday, May 23, 2023 10:53:44 AM

The proposed changes to council norms and procedures is a clear move to limit if not significantly restrict resident comments and feedback. I recall campaign promises of current council members, Mayor Meadows and councilmember Fligor to listen to residents - in one case "listen to all the residents." This will be a clear broken promise.

Why reduce the time to inform the public to 3 days from 8 days?
Why not allow people to delegate time so that one person can provide a more complete perspective?

So what is Council doing to solicit more resident input?

Scott Spielman

From: [Jim Fenton](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM 8 -- 23 MAY 2023
Date: Tuesday, May 23, 2023 11:03:44 AM

Council members,

This comment is in response to the proposed changes in Council Norms and Procedures, specifically the provision for members of the public to cede time to others (item 11.6 B).

I support the proposed change to eliminate the ceding of time to others. Verbal comments at Council meetings are best when they summarize the speaker's position; more detailed comments can always be submitted in writing, and there is no limit on the length of those comments.

I have been at many Council meetings where the provision to cede time has been badly abused. With the advent of remote and hybrid meetings, it has become possible to recruit others to cede time simply by having others in the household speak up and without the need to invest in physically attending the meeting, and this has made things even worse.

Please eliminate the ceding of time for public comments.

-Jim Fenton