

# CITY OF LINCOLNTON



## **RULES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT AT MEETINGS OF THE LINCOLNTON CITY COUNCIL**

**THESE RULES**, promulgated pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes 160A-81.1, will hereafter remain in full force and effect until such time as they are amended, altered, or rescinded by the Lincolnton City Council.

**PURPOSE OF THE RULES:** The Lincolnton City Council (hereafter referred to as Council) is committed to affording the members of the public an opportunity to offer comments and suggestions for the wise, efficient, and effective government of the City of Lincolnton. Council encourages and welcomes the input of citizens. In addition to public hearings, a special time will be set aside at each regular monthly meeting of Council for the purpose of receiving comments and suggestions from the public. In order to balance the need and desire for such citizen input with the necessity of disposing of its regular business in the course of said meeting, Council does hereby establish the Rules For Public Comments as hereinafter set forth.

### **THE RULES:**

- a. Unless posted otherwise as required by law, Council convenes its regular monthly meetings on the first Thursday of each calendar month at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Lincolnton City Hall. At each regular monthly meeting, the agenda will contain an item entitled "Public Comment."
- b. Persons who wish to address Council during the time set aside for Public Comment must register on a sign-up sheet, which will be available at the desk of the City Clerk in the Council Chambers between 6:30 p.m. and 6:55 p.m. on the night of each regular meeting. All registrants for the Public Comments time will provide their names, addresses, and the subject matter of their proposed comments. Registration to speak must be in person during the time specified above. There will be no registration by telephone.
- c. Should a registrant desire to provide Council with written material, all such items must be delivered to the City Clerk at the time of registration.
- d. Each speaker must first be recognized by the Mayor or the presiding officer as having the exclusive right to be heard, and once so acknowledged, the speaker will approach the podium facing Council. Before beginning comments or remarks, each speaker will state

his/her name and address. Speakers will be acknowledged by the Mayor or presiding officer in the order in which their names appear on the sign-up sheet.

- e. Comments will be limited to three (3) minutes per person. A speaker cannot yield any unused time to another speaker. The City Clerk will be the official time-keeper. When the three-minute period expires, the City Clerk will announce "Time." Upon said announcement, the speaker will make no further comments and will return to the public seating area.
- f. Only two speakers will be allowed to comment on the same subject at each meeting; provided, however, if there are opposing viewpoints on the same subject, two speakers will be allowed for both the supporting and the opposing sides. It is recommended that large groups or delegations select their spokespersons in advance of the meeting.
- g. Public Comment time is not set aside to require Council to answer any impromptu questions. Speakers will address all comments to the Council as a whole and not to one or more members as individuals. At the request of a Council Member, the City Manager, City Clerk, City Attorney, or other staff member present may respond to a concern raised by the speaker, once the speaker is finished.
- h. Discussions or comments between speakers and the audience will not be allowed.
- i. For clarification, Council Members may ask the speaker such questions as they might deem necessary and appropriate.
- j. Any action on items or matters addressed during the Public Comment time will be in the sole discretion of Council.
- k. Speakers will not comment or remark on any of the following: matters which concern the candidacy of any person seeking public office; and matters which are closed session matters, including, but not limited to, anticipated or pending litigation, personnel, property acquisition, and all other items which are made confidential by law.
- l. Speakers will address Council with respect and courtesy and will not do or say anything that will interfere with or disrupt the dignity and decorum of the meeting. Should the Mayor or presiding officer deem that the speaker is violating any of these rules, he may immediately end the comments or the speaker.
- m. During the course of the Public Comment time, the audience will refrain from applause, cheers, boos, clapping, ovations, disruptive gestures, or outbursts of any kind.
- n. These Rules are effective upon adoption.

**ADOPTED this the 4<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2005 at the regular monthly meeting of the Lincoln City Council.**