

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 7, 2004

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *ps*

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTING GUIDELINES FOR HONEST CIVIC DISCOURSE FOR THOSE PARTICIPATING IN MEETINGS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

**ISSUE:** Consideration of adopting guidelines for honest civic discourse for those participating in meetings in the Council Chamber.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council adopt the attached guidelines for honest civic discourse for those participating in meetings in the Council Chamber.

**DISCUSSION:** Members of the Alexandria community, its elected officials and City staff place a high value on constructive and thoughtful debate on public issues. During Council's retreat and strategic planning sessions we discussed the adoption of house rules or a professional code of conduct to be used for conducting the City's business. Mayor Euille has asked that the attached guidelines for honest civic discourse for those participating in meetings in the Council Chamber be docketed for adoption by City Council.

Once adopted by Council, the attached guidelines would be posted in the Council Chamber, added to the speaker form, included on the City's website and would apply to all who participate in meetings in the Chamber including public officials, staff and members of the community.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Alexandria City Council Guidelines for Honest Civic Discourse for those Participating in Meetings in the Council Chamber.

**STAFF:**  
Michele Evans, Assistant City Manager



## ALEXANDRIA CITY COUNCIL

### Guidelines for Honest Civic Discourse for those Participating in Meetings in the Council Chamber

Members of the Alexandria community, its elected officials and City staff place a high value on constructive and thoughtful debate on public issues. To this end, all who participate in meetings in the Chamber, including public officials, staff and members of the community, are expected to observe the following guidelines.

1. Treat Everyone with Respect
2. Do Your Homework – Come Prepared
3. Express Your Ideas and Opinions in an Open and Helpful Manner
4. Be Clear and Concise in Your Comments
5. Be Honest and Up-front in Your Comments
6. Focus on the Issues Before the Decision Making Body – Avoid Personalizing Issues
7. Listen and Let Others Express their Ideas and Opinions
8. Avoid Side Conversations When Someone Else is Speaking
9. If a Decision is Made with which You Do Not Concur, Agree to Disagree and Move On

Adopted by the Alexandria City Council on October \_\_\_\_, 2004.

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William D. Euille, Mayor



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10/12/2004 12:40 PM

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Subject: Guidelines for "Honest Civic Discourse..."

19  
10-12-04

*Final for Stan*

Dear All:

Below please find my recommendations with respect to the Civic Discourse Guidelines docketed for our consideration tonight (#19). I agree in principle with the guidelines and thank the mayor and staff for moving this forward. At the same time I think the Guidelines would benefit from some additional "wordsmithing." My edits/suggestions are underlined and italicized.

Ludwig

1. Treat everyone with respect, ~~consideration and courtesy~~.
2. Do your homework - be prepared and be familiar with the docket in advance of public meetings.
3. no change
4. Be respectful of others' time by being clear and concise in your comments and/or questions.
5. Demonstrate honesty and integrity in your comments and actions.
6. no change
7. no change
8. Eliminate completely...I don't want to be accused of violating the rules if I have a side bar with one of my colleagues or city staff. I think our guideline to be respectful and courteous suffices.
9. If a decision is made with which you do not concur, agree to disagree, to use available means of civil and civic redress, and move on.

*change by Paul & Bill*

Thanks for your consideration,

Ludwig

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*appropriate*  
*change by Bob*  
*and/or*