

COUNCIL NOTICE OF MOTION

Received Date	March 4, 2025
Meeting Date	March 10, 2025
Open or Closed	Open Session

Members of Common Council

SUBJECT: Speaking time for statutory public hearings

Primary Author	Input from Council	Input from Staff
Councillor Barry Ogden		City Clerk

PROPOSED MOTION:

That staff be directed to report back to Council with a draft Procedural By-Law amendment to set the time limit for individuals speaking at statutory public hearings to a 5-minute maximum.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In response to concerns regarding the efficiency of public hearings for rezoning applications and to ensure fairness, consistency, and timely decision-making, I am recommending that Council consider reducing the speaking time limit to 5-minutes for citizens who wish to address Common Council during these hearings.

Currently, citizens wishing to address Common Council at public hearings for rezoning applications are given up to 10 minutes to express their opinions. While this duration provides time for detailed commentary, it has led to extended meetings that can delay the decision-making process, especially when multiple speakers are present.

Although this proposal would reduce the length of time each speaker is given, it would not place any limits on the number of speakers who can participate in the hearing.

Rationale for Change:

1. **Promote Efficiency:** Reducing the speaking time to 5 minutes will help streamline the meeting, enabling the council to maintain its focus on decision-making without unnecessary delays caused by lengthy individual comments. This will help avoid the extension of council meetings late into the evening and allow for a more efficient agenda.



2. **Ensure Fairness:** A 5-minute speaking limit gives each person an equal opportunity to present their views while maintaining the flow of the meeting.
3. **Encourage Concise and Focused Commentary:** Reducing the speaking time limit encourages citizens to be more concise and to focus on the most important points, enhancing the quality and impact of the feedback provided. This allows for a clearer understanding of the community's concerns without excessive repetition or irrelevant information.
4. **Increase Participation:** With a shorter speaking time, there is more opportunity for a wider range of individuals to speak within the allotted time for public comment. This change can make it easier for people with busy schedules to attend and participate in the public hearing process.

By shortening the speaking time limit, we can enhance the overall efficiency of council meetings, provide more time for diverse community input, and ensure that the meeting flows more smoothly.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

SERVICE AND FINANCIAL OUTCOMES:

Improved meeting efficiency.

INPUT FROM OTHERS:

n/a

ATTACHMENTS –

n/a

