



## Citizen Participation Guide

The Northfield City Council invites the public to express their views and comments on issues with the City Council through the following ways:

- Public comment times at City Council meetings
- eComment through the City's website on agenda items
- Meetings of various Boards or Commissions
- Phone calls, e-mails, letters and/or visits with Council Members and/or City Staff.

### **City Council Meetings:**

Meetings of the City Council are where the business of the City is conducted and vital decisions for the City's future are made. The main objective of the Council in the proper conduct of its meetings is to ensure the public's business is conducted in an efficient manner with full opportunity for Council members to communicate their thoughts on the agenda items before the Council. City Council meetings are open to the public pursuant to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law.

The City Council has adopted Rules of Decorum (copy attached) for City Council Meetings. The rules of decorum apply to all persons participating in a meeting unless expressly noted. When participants violate rules of order and decorum, the presiding officer is authorized to:

- Not recognize a breaching participant's request to speak until decorum is observed.
- Declare the participant's actions out of order.
- Order removal from the council chambers by law enforcement until the participant agrees to abide by rules of decorum.

The City Council meets:

- The first and third Tuesday of each month in regular session;
- The second Tuesday of the month in a work session;
- 6:00 – 9:00 pm;
- Council Chambers of the Northfield City Hall, 801 Washington Street, Northfield;

Citizens requesting items for an agenda may contact their elected representative or city staff to have their request considered

The use of cameras, video, and other recording devices, is permitted during City Council meetings. However, these devices must be used in an unobtrusive manner that does not disrupt or delay the meeting. Cell phones and other devices must be silenced during meetings.

### **City Council Meeting Agendas/Opportunities to Speak at a Meeting:**

The typical order of agenda items is as follows (with public opportunities to speak highlighted):

1. **Call to Order/Roll Call/Notification of Quorum**
2. **Approval of Agenda**
3. **Approval of Minutes**
4. **Presentations**
5. **Consent agenda**
6. **Open public comments** - Persons may take one opportunity to address the council for up to two (2) minutes (not including interpreter's time) on any topic, even if on the agenda, with the condition that they may not speak on the same item later in the meeting. No notification of the mayor is required. However, speakers are asked to complete a comment card. Persons wanting a response to a question must submit the question in writing to the City Clerk. Questions must include name, address, e-mail and phone number. Comments may also be made electronically until 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting through the eComment (electronic comment) system.
7. **Public Hearings** – 6:00 p.m. or later (procedure listed below).
8. **Regular agenda** - Persons that wish to speak on a regular agenda item must register name and address with the City by completing & submitting a comment card **before the start of the meeting**. Persons may also use the electronic register to speak option on the City's website or contact the City Clerk no later than 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting. Persons may also provide comments through the eComment (electronic comment) system no later than 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting. The Mayor will call up individuals to speak based on preregistration/cards submitted after the staff report on an item. Please be respectful of the public's and the Council's time. Members of the public wishing to speak must adhere to the following guidelines:
  - Preregister to speak before the start of the meeting;
  - Speak only once for no more than two minutes (not including interpreter's time) on the topic unless the speaker is addressed by the Council;
  - Identify your relationship to the topic;
  - Have a spokesperson or two for your group to present your comments.
  - Persons wanting a response to a question must submit the question in writing to the City Clerk, including name, address, e-mail and phone number.
9. **City Administrator update**
10. **Council reports**
11. **Adjourn.**

### **Public Hearing Procedure:**

A Public Hearing is used by the City Council to solicit the public's comments on various projects or city operation procedures.

- A. The Chair will open the hearing by identifying the subject.
- B. Staff Presentation- staff will give a presentation on the subject.
- C. Applicant's Presentation- if needed.
- D. Questions of Clarifications from City Council - This section will be used when there are questions of the presenter and/or staff on the facts on which the public hearing is being held.
- E. Any material to be entered into the record shall be noted. Any written communication presented to the council during a council meeting shall be read into the record or summarized for the record or simply delivered to the council, as the council may determine. They shall then be recorded in the minutes by title and filed with the minutes in the office of the city clerk.

- F. Public Input- The public will have the opportunity to speak for or against the issue. The public may ask questions, make comments, voice support, agree or disagree with the issue.
1. Chair will recognize speaker at podium and conversation will be between Chair and speaker; and Chair and Council Members.
  2. At the podium the citizen must give their name, address, and if representing a business, must give the name of the business or corporation. If an attorney or consultant is representing a client, the client must be identified for the record.
  3. Citizens will be allowed to speak a maximum of two (2) minutes (not including interpreter's time) per item.
  4. Citizens who have material to be handed out to the City Council will pass the material to the City Administrator. The City Administrator will then pass the information to the appropriate people. A minimum of twelve (12) copies are needed.
- G. Motion to Close Hearing- the Chair will state if there is an extension of time for public input into the hearing. If not, the public hearing will be adjourned.

**Assessment Hearing Procedures:**

Assessment Hearings are similar to the Public Hearing procedure except written notice of objection pertaining to your assessment is required prior to adjournment of the public hearing.

**Documents/Recordings**

A complete City Council packet is typically available at City Hall and on the City's website [www.ci.northfield.mn.us](http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us) by noon on the Friday prior to a City Council meeting for the public to review. A complete paper packet is also placed in the Council Chambers prior to a City Council meeting for the public to review. A meeting notice list and agenda are posted on the bulletin board outside the Council Chambers located at City Hall.

Council meetings are live streamed and recorded. **Recordings**, official records, and documents are available on the City's website [www.ci.northfield.mn.us](http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us).

**City Council Work Session:**

The work session is used by the City Council to discuss various upcoming issues. Decision items are forwarded to regular City Council meetings for consideration of approval. Work sessions are for discussion by the Mayor and City Council and City staff. The Mayor or City Administrator may arrange a presentation by an individual or group to the Council at a work session. There is no public comment at work sessions except through eComment (electronic comments).

**Please watch for publications on the City's Website ([www.ci.northfield.mn.us](http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us)) for any changes in date and times of meetings and work sessions.**

**Please contact the City Administration Office if you need special accommodations related to a disability while attending the City Council meeting.**

Updated: March 2017