

Rules of Decorum
City of Leon Valley Council
Meetings

Video Recording Devices and Citizen
Comments

Ordinance 2020-33 regarding rules of meeting decorum and conduct was adopted at the July 21, 2020 Leon Valley City Council Meeting

How citizens may participate

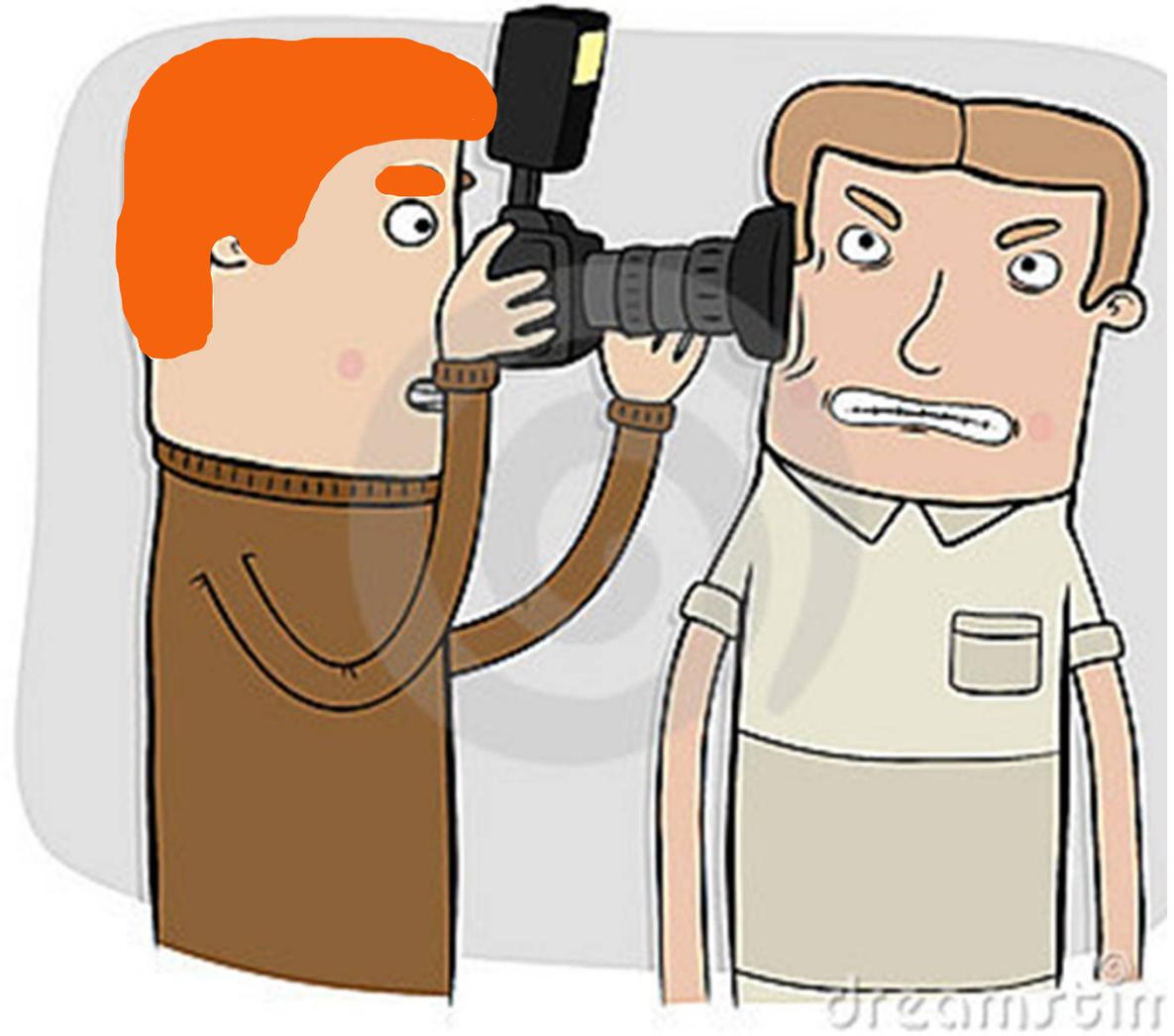
When citizens may speak

Recognition by presiding officer

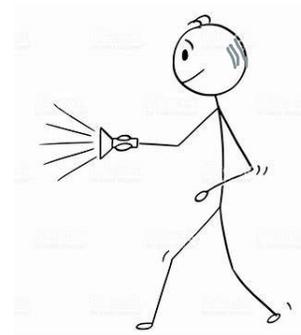
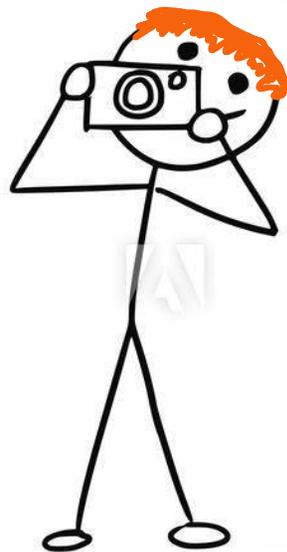
Disruptive behavior

Enforcement of rules by presiding officer

Citizens should not be intimidated or aggravated by other attendees at meetings.



This occurred at the last city council meeting when two of our own Leon Valley Citizens had been harassed to the point that they felt the need to take matters into their own hands.



The Texas Open Meetings Act provides as follows:

§ 551.023. Recording of Meeting by Person in Attendance

(a) A person in attendance may record all or any part of an open meeting of a governmental body by means of a recorder, video camera, or other means of aural or visual reproduction.

(b) A governmental body may adopt reasonable rules to maintain order at a meeting, including rules relating to:

(1) the location of recording equipment; and

(2) the manner in which the recording is conducted.

(c) A rule adopted under Subsection (b) may not prevent or unreasonably impair a person from exercising a right granted under Subsection (a).

Flow of council meetings

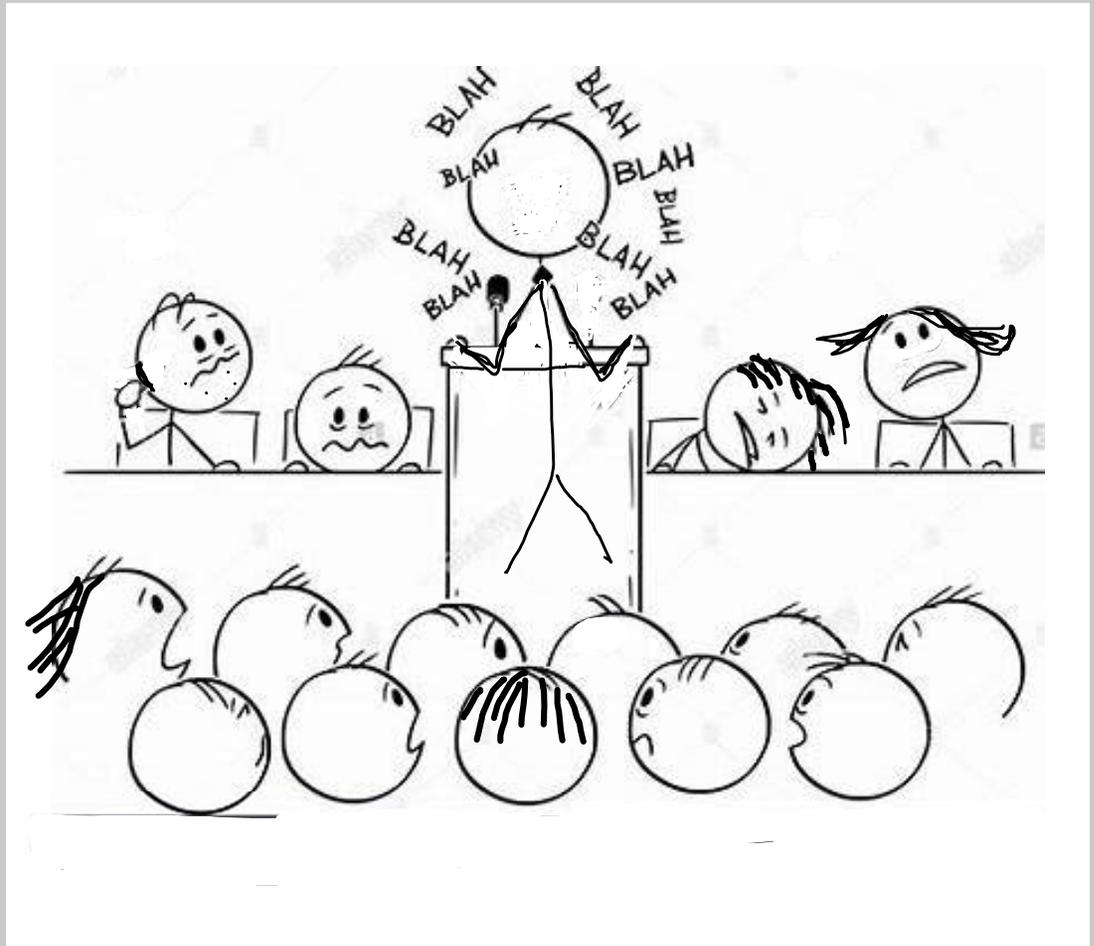
- It is up to the presiding officer (mayor) to make sure our meetings are run in an efficient manner so the governing body (city council) can take care of city business.
- If, for whatever reason, the presiding officer is unable to maintain decorum, council has the duty to assist.
- It is not fair and just to the Citizens and Businesses of Leon Valley if we allow disturbances to distract from the business at hand.
- We owe this to the city as a whole.

MEETINGS and CITY BUSINESS

- Meetings of the council shall be open to the general public except as may be specifically provided by state law.
- Because council meetings are held to perform the business of the city, the city council, led by the presiding officer, has the duty to carry out meetings in an efficient manner, free of disruptions.
- Without rules governing conduct and what may be discussed, there may be a tendency by some to abuse or derail the agenda of the public meeting for purposes inconsistent with the legitimate goals of the local government.

DISRUPTIVE ACTIONS can

have the effect of hijacking a meeting, to include being unreasonably repetitious or by unnecessarily dragging out a topic or even promoting one's personal agenda or business. Council is being prevented from doing the work of the city, so in effect, this is stealing from the Citizens of Leon Valley.



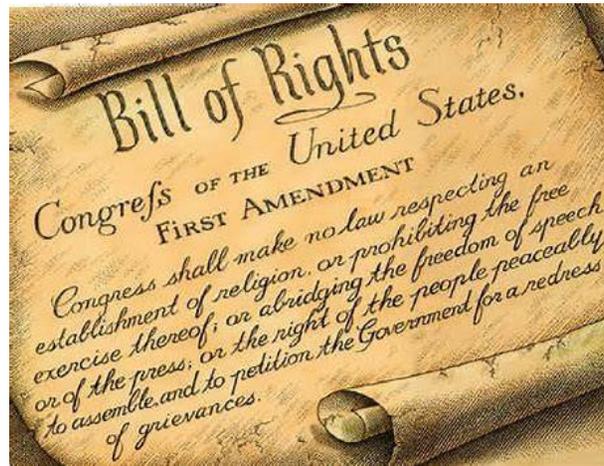
Possible rules of decorum for photography and videography during meetings

- Handheld single shot photography from council chambers seats allowed
- No continuous or burst shooting mode photography in council chambers
- No flash photography
- Video recording only allowed from lobby OR video recording in council chambers only allowed from along wall just inside second door
- One recording device or camera per person
- Equipment use or placement should never interfere with meetings or with those attending meetings and cannot be left unattended
- City staff conducting city business, meeting livestream, etc. exempt
- REMEMBER, WE ARE HERE TO CONDUCT THE BUSINESS OF THE CITY
- COUNCIL DISCRETION

Possible rules of decorum changes for citizen comments during meetings

- Citizens of Leon Valley and legitimate Leon Valley Businesses will still have the opportunity to speak for up to three minutes during the “citizens to be heard” portion of the agenda and prior to City Council’s discussion of each posted agenda item.
- Non-Leon Valley Citizens may address Council at the first “citizens to be heard” for up to three minutes.
- As always, individuals requesting to speak must first be recognized by the presiding officer.
- Council discretion

While the First Amendment clearly states there can be no law that abridges freedom of speech, it does not create a right to communicate a person's views at all times or in any manner that person desires. (Heffron v. Int'l Society for Krishna Consciousness, Inc., 452 U.S. 640, 647, 101 S.Ct. 2559 (1981).)



Freedom of Speech is not a license to abuse, it is a responsibility.

Discussion

