

# City of Los Alamitos

## Agenda Report Discussion Items

February 18, 2014  
Item No: 11A

To: Mayor Warren Kusumoto & Members of the City Council

Via: Bret M. Plumlee, City Manager

From: Windmera Quintanar, CMC, City Clerk

Subject: Consideration of Limiting Council Comments

**Summary:** Mayor Graham-Mejia requested Staff research the possibility of limiting Council comments. This item reviews the Council's current policy and gives an overview of surrounding city policies.

**Recommendation:** Action as Council deems appropriate.

## Background

On April 15, 2013, Council requested Staff address Council meeting time limits. At the Council Member Kusumoto requested Council comment limits be addressed. On June 17, 2013, Council adopted Resolution 2013-09, which established Council meeting time limits. Council comment limits were not included because Council consensus was overall time limits would encourage Council to limit its discussion.

## Discussion

### Current Policy on Council Comments

The Los Alamitos Municipal Code, Section 2.04.150 Rules of order, states "...the procedure of the Council shall be governed by majority vote of the City Council. Robert's Rules of Order may be used as a guide but shall not be conclusive authority...".

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised In Brief, addresses speech limits in debate (p.29). It states each member may speak twice on a debatable motion for up to ten minutes each time. Currently, the presiding officer, Mayor, has the ability to use this as a guideline to facilitate a healthy discussion.

## Surrounding Cities

Staff contacted surrounding cities regarding limit on Council comments and received responses from eight cities. The cities of Anaheim, Cypress, Huntington Beach, Lake Forest, and Rancho Santa Margarita do not have a policy in place. The cities of Buena Park, Seal Beach, and Stanton have provisions included in their Council Policy and Procedure manuals. The provisions are outlined below.

Buena Park – The Mayor has the responsibility to control debate and the order of speakers. Each Council Member can speak twice on an issue. Council Members govern the length of their comments, generally not to exceed 10 minutes. The Mayor has responsibility to assist Council Members by signaling when a Council Member has been speaking for over 10 minutes.

Seal Beach - No Council Member shall be allowed to speak more than once upon a particular subject until each Council Member desiring to do so has spoken. Each Council Member shall limit comments to 15 minutes on each item on the agenda.

Stanton - No Council Member shall be allowed to speak more than once upon any one subject until every member choosing to speak thereon has spoken. No Council Member shall speak for a time longer than five minutes each time he has the floor, without the approval of a majority vote of the Council.

## Conclusion

Council should consider the possibility of establishing Council comment time limits. If desired, direction should be provided to Staff for formalization by Resolution at a later date.

## **Fiscal Impact**

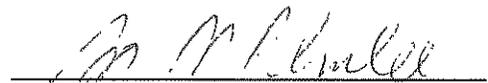
None at this time.

Submitted By:



Windmerá Quintanar, CMC  
City Clerk

Approved By:



Bret M. Plumlee  
City Manager

*Attachment: 1. Excerpt of City Council Minutes – June 17, 2013*

**EXCERPT FROM THE  
MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF LOS ALAMITOS  
June 17, 2013**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The City Council met in Regular Session at 6:00 p.m., Monday, June 17, 2013, in the Council Chamber, 3191 Katella Avenue, Mayor Kusumoto presiding.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Council Members: Edgar, Grose, Murphy, Mayor Pro Tem  
Graham-Mejia, Mayor Kusumoto

**Absent:** Council Members: None

**10. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**B. Establishing Council Meeting Time Limits (City Clerk)**

On April 15, 2013, Council Member Grose, with the support of Mayor Kusumoto, requested Staff research the possibility of not starting any new business after 10:00 p.m. This item discusses establishing Council meeting time limits and was continued from the May 20, 2013, Council meeting.

Interim City Manager Korduner summarized the Staff report, referring to the information contained therein, and answered questions from the City Council.

Council Member Grose suggested changing the final adjournment hour to 10:59 p.m. He believed this would encourage Council to limit its discussion and pointed out Council could vote to waive the time limits if appropriate. He stated it would be worth a trial and encouraged the Council to approve.

Mayor Pro Tem Graham-Mejia stated City Clerk Quintanar had stated to her knowledge, Los Alamitos was the only Orange County city that had one meeting per month. She felt limiting the amount of time to do the business of the City was not fair to the people and pointed out recent meetings had ended quickly. She indicated she could not support this item unless Council returned to twice a month meetings; however, the cost savings would then be lost. She stated support for remaining with once a month meetings and doing the same amount of business.

Mayor Kusumoto stated Council could regulate themselves and run an efficient meeting. He stated the policy allowed for Council to extend the time limits and was not a bad policy as long as Council was efficient in

conducting its business. He stated it was important to complete the people's business.

Mayor Pro Tem Graham-Mejia stated opposition to the majority having the ability to waive the time limits and not the Chair.

Mayor Kusumoto opened the item for public comment.

JM Ivler, resident, spoke in opposition to the item.  
Mayor Kusumoto closed the item for public comment.

Council Member Grose stated the policy gave Council a functional structure and allowed the group to continue the discussion if needed.

Council Member Grose made a motion to approve, with the revision to Section 2, Final Adjournment hour 10:59 p.m. with no discussion after 9:45 p.m. unless majority of Council wishes to do so.

Council Member Murphy requested the motion include a four month review for efficiency.

Council Member Grose agreed.

Mayor Pro Tem Graham-Mejia stated she would rather see the Council limit their responses to 5-9 minutes in total. She believed 2-3 minutes for questions and then 2 minutes for comments should be sufficient and allow Council to do the business of the City quicker. She stated the meetings had been reduced already and did not feel it was honoring the people to reduce the time further.

Council Member Edgar thanked Council Member Grose for bringing the item forward and supported the four month review.

Mayor Kusumoto believed an efficient meeting could be run. He stated opposition to a majority vote and felt two Council Members should be able to continue the discussion to provide a check and balance.

Motion/Second: Grose/Edgar  
Carried 3/2 (Graham-Mejia and Kusumoto cast the dissenting vote): The City Council adopted Resolution 2013-09, entitled, "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LOS ALAMITOS, CALIFORNIA, ESTABLISHING COUNCIL MEETING TIME LIMITS" and directed Staff to bring back to Council for review in four months.