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News Release

For Immediate Release

Civility Must Prevail at Public Meetings

City officials reminded citizens at Monday's City Council Meeting to keep things civil at public meetings, following a Feb. 25 City Council Meeting that included a speaker using profanity in his remarks and an incident where a spectator was out-of-order and approached the dais and City staff as he argued his point with the City Attorney.

"Let me be clear. From this point forward, none of these behaviors will be tolerated during City Council meetings," said Mayor Bob Stephens.

The Mayor plans to address this at tonight's City Council meeting and future public meetings. Staff will add posters leading into Council Chambers reminding people of the rules outlined in the City Code.

"To address the first issue, we won't tolerate profanity, obscene, or threatening remarks to occur during public testimony, per City Code," Mayor Stephens said. "Whether these types of remarks are made toward City Council as a whole, individual City Council members, City staff members, other members of the audience, or other citizens in general, we will not tolerate them. Individuals conducting themselves in this manner will be removed from City Hall."

To address the second issue, Mayor Stephens says Council won't tolerate outbursts from the audience, including yelling out, cheering, or applauding. Any citizen who yells out, or in any other way, disrupts the meeting, will be escorted out of the building. In some cases, the citizen may be banned from future meetings.

Finally, any citizen who approaches City Council beyond the lectern will be removed from the meeting – no questions asked.

In addition, the City Manager, or the person acting in that role, will also now be authorized to take whatever actions are necessary to maintain decorum. The Chair of the Planning & Zoning Commission and Director of Planning & Development, or those acting in those roles, will be authorized to take actions necessary to maintain decorum in such situations during Planning & Zoning Commission meetings.

"It is unfortunate that we must take these safety precautions. City Council and all City staff understand that citizens and other interested parties sometimes get passionate about controversial issues that come before this body. But civility must prevail."

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