

Peter Valentine Communications : 1/24/2000 Request for the Following Public Comment Rules to be implemented.

Whereas it is an undeniable fact that both the United States Constitution and the Commonwealth Constitution forbid the creation of any law which denies the citizen's their right to express their views on government related and government affected societal matters, reasonably as they see fit,

I hereby suggest that the following guidelines would enable a much more successful achievement of balancing citizen communication interests with government business meeting activity.

First that the Council establish one meeting a month when it is present in entirety strictly for the purpose of listening and responding to what citizens have to say, so long as as the communication is related to government operations or government affected societal activity.

That the total amount of time each citizen has to speak is 7 minutes if necessary. But that at the beginning all citizens be urged to speak right to the point and use as little time as possible to allow as many citizens to speak as possible.

That the total amount of time for this meeting shall be four hours, which would mean that if it began at 6 it would end at 10.

That if council members are asked to respond, they do and that council members may also ask for response.

Secondly that at the general council meeting, public comment may only be what is on the agenda and that citizens be allowed to comment at one time on any or all matters on the agenda, for a time of four minutes. In a city with a population as intelligent as Cambridge and having a capacity to organize and present complex ideas, my sense is that 3 minutes is a bit too short for a full completed communication. And that depending on the size of the council's general meeting agenda, the council may limit the amount speakers, but not the amount of speaking time, to a reasonable amount. In this situation it would then be the citizen's responsibility to get to the meeting ahead of time to organize themselves so that a few people may speak for many. It would also be nice on nights when there is a big agenda that the council have table and staff to help citizens come to the table to create a list of speaking subjects so that those citizens speaking on the same subject may designate a few citizens to speak on a number of related issues, in this way diminishing the amount of speakers.

Thirdly that on special nights of separate public hearings where the matter may affect many citizens, that all councillors are required to attend.

Fourth that all meetings be televised for maximum citizen awareness.

On another related public speaking matter let it be brought to attention that constitutions have laws to deal with government officials who have gone astray. Citizens have a right to publicly confront government officials when they have gone astray. The awareness of an official that of the possibility of answering for one's acts in public, is a vital right of citizens to enable them to personally confront defiled government activity.

Consent Communication #5

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A communication was received from
Peter Valentine, relative to the
public comment rules for the
City Council meetings.

S-16

In City Council January 24, 2000

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