



# OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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TO: The Honorable, the City Council

FROM: D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk *DM*  
John E. Flynn, Deputy City Clerk *JE*

DATE: February 3, 1994

SUBJECT: Proposed Change to Rule 23

We are proposing the following change to the City Council's order of business, as set forth in Rule 23. The change would move the Council's consideration of unfinished business to a time after the Council has considered the City Manager's agendas and committee reports. This timing would facilitate referral and consolidation of items raised by the Manager and the committees to the related unfinished business items already on the City Council calendar.

The proposed change would be accomplished by substituting for the first paragraph of Rule 23 the following language:

Rule 23. At every regular meeting of this City Council the order of business shall be as follows:

1. Reading of the record, if requested, by the City Council.
2. Motions for reconsideration.
3. Manager's Consent Agenda.
4. Communications from the City Manager. (Manager's nonconsent agenda)
5. Consent Communications.
6. Committee Reports.

7. Unfinished business from preceding meetings.
  - a. Charter rights.
  - b. On the table.
  - c. Unfinished business.
8. Consent orders and resolutions.<sup>1</sup>
9. Presentation of petitions, memorials and other communications.
10. Motions, orders or resolutions.
11. Communications and reports from city officers.

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In addition, the City Council may wish to consider two additional changes to the rules to improve the flow of the meeting. Rule 23 implements the requirement of the Charter, MGL ch. 43 sec. 98 that citizens and employees shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard at any meeting of the City Council in regard to any matter considered thereat. Rule 23 provides that the time allowed for each person shall be limited to ten minutes on each matter upon which they wish to express their opinion unless the City Council shall vote additional time.

At the very least, the Council may want to incorporate a change which allows the City Council to vote to reduce the time when there are several speakers who wish to comment upon a particular issue. Such a change would conform to the actual practice that the City Council has adopted when there are long lists or lines of people who wish to speak. Cambridge is also unusual in the length of time members of the public are allowed to address each issue. There are also many jurisdictions that attempt to accommodate public testimony by providing an hour prior to the beginning of the meeting during which members of the public may address the City Council on any item that will be considered at the meeting. Such a procedure allows the public to make comments without having to wait for hours for the particular issue to come up; on the other hand, it means that the comments are made before the public has heard the Councillors debate the issue.

Finally, the City Council may wish to incorporate a rule which sets forth the practice of the Council: During the time when a citizen is exercising his or her right to be heard under Rule 23, that citizen shall not address questions to any City Councillor, nor shall any City Councillor question the member of the public providing the testimony.

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<sup>1</sup>The Clerk's Office suggests that City Council consider placing all orders or resolutions on the Consent Order list. Those orders about which individual Councillors wish to speak could be removed at the meeting, which is the manner in which most orders are finally placed on the nonconsent list.

S-30

Comm. and Reports from City Officers #1

Comm received from D. Margaret Drury and John Flynn  
regarding the proposed change to Rule 23.

In City Council February 7, 1994

*Referred to the Rules  
Committee  
Copy sent to Rules Committee  
2/8/94 @*