

February 19, 2025

Dear Mayor and Council,

We appreciate the responses to our concerns and suggestions about the vote to use Robert's Rules for Town Council Meetings. We would like to thank Mayor Compton for his suggestions to the council to implement some of our ideas. We are pleased that the mayor clarified that the council will allow residents to comment on items on the agenda as well as those not on the agenda.

We also understand that the council is adjusting to a new system and we know that this will take time. We are truly grateful for the volunteer hours the mayor and councilors spend on town business.

There are still a few points that we would like clarified. If some of our queries are still not decided, please let us know.

Clarification #1

**Has the council definitely decided not to allow an opportunity for residents to speak before a vote?**

Barbara and Eva's response stated:

As previously stated, these are *Council* meetings, and residents should not expect to participate in these meetings as Councilors. A three-minute time frame is normally sufficient for a resident to express their opinion. As it stands today, many residents contact Councilors before or after meetings to share their views, and as Councilors, we take them very seriously.

*If there is clearly much resident confusion or dissent over a motion, and/or if new information arises during the debate of a motion, Council may use Robert's Rules to defer the motion to the next meeting. This will give time for further public comment after the meeting and at the beginning of the next meeting. (Italics added.)*

This states that the council can decide to defer a motion until the next meeting if there is confusion or dissent over a motion. However, prior to voting **the council may not know** there is confusion or dissent if there has not been much previous discussion or if the council discussion contains information new to residents.

This is precisely why we are suggesting an additional time to speak **before** a vote.

### **Clarification #2**

#### **Has the council reached consensus about using every rule?**

Barbara and Eva's response stated:

**As far as we know**, the Council intends to operate under all Robert's Rules, with the addition of the ones that we add, for example, the rule that public appearances are allowed.

If we decided to use only some rules, how would we decide which to follow? Who would keep track of the rules we are following and those we are not following? Trying to pick and choose would be an unwieldy process which would lead to unpredictable governance of meetings. Robert's Rules are developed by parliamentarians with far more expertise in procedure than members of our Town Council, and the rules are designed to work together. In regular practice, there is a small number of rules which govern most meetings.

Prior to the February council meeting, a document indicating the primary rules used for governing its meetings was posted, and this is helpful. Of course, in every political body, there are debates about the rules and process.

### Clarification #3

#### **Is the council considering citing the rules as per our suggestion?**

Regardless of good faith, good intentions and ethics if using every rule at council meetings, it follows that an obscure rule could be used at any point to delay, derail or advance an issue. At any given time, the Town Council will have members with varying degrees of familiarity with Roberts Rules of order. We believe that it is simply a protection to both counselors and residents that a rarely used rule will require councilors to cite the specific rule involved.

Citing the rule in these cases will increase transparency, and ensure that the process and procedures for meetings are practiced equitably.

Thank you for your time and diligent efforts to address our questions and concerns. We look forward to your response.

Respectfully submitted by

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Bob Booher

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