

R8

RULES, ELECTIONS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS MOTION

In 1999, the City Charter established the Neighborhood Council System, to connect government with the community and "to promote more citizen participation in government and make government more responsive to local needs ..." (Charter Section 900). In recent years however, Neighborhood Councils have increasingly expressed dissatisfaction with how they are included in policy discussions and often feel left out of the decision making process entirely.

Community participation in City Council meetings in the form of public testimony is an important tool for constituents to voice their opinions regarding a wide variety of issues. For some members of the public, this is the best opportunity they have to speak directly to their Council member. Individuals are typically allowed one or two minute increments to give testimony, these time limits also apply to representatives from the City's Neighborhood Council system.

As stated in the Council Rules, "The Presiding Officer may exercise discretion in determining the duration of speakers' comments based upon factors such as the length of the agenda or substance of the agenda items, the number of public comment speaker cards submitted, the need for the Council to conclude its business as expeditiously as is practicable, and whether the Council is in danger of losing a quorum."

Nonetheless, Neighborhood Council representatives have expressed a need for more time when addressing the Council to fully explain their thoughts, ideas and opinions regarding decisions to be made on projects that directly affect their communities

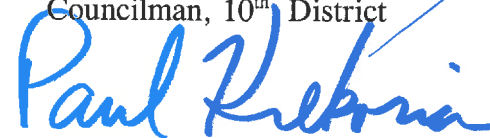
I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Attorney, with the assistance of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, and in consultation with interested Neighborhood Councils, be requested to report with options, including possible amendment to the Council Rules, allowing for official representatives of Neighborhood Councils or Neighborhood Council Alliances to address the City Council, its committees, City commissions, and boards with sufficient time to present the official view of their Neighborhood Council Boards or Alliances.

PRESENTED BY



HERB J. WESSON, Jr.  
Councilman, 10<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY





April 1, 2015

ORIGINAL