



Rules Subcommittee Agenda

City of Newton In City Council

Thursday, September 19, 2024

7:00PM

The Rules Subcommittee will hold this meeting as a virtual meeting on Thursday, September 19, at 7:00 pm. To view this meeting using Zoom, use this link: <https://newtonma-gov.zoom.us/j/84401339552> or dial 1-646-558-8656 and use the meeting ID 844 0133 9552.

Scheduled for Discussion:

Chair's Note: *The Rules Subcommittee will begin reviewing City Council Rules. The primary focus will be outlining a work plan and reviewing the initial list of topics/specific changes to City Council Rules.*

Respectfully Submitted,

John Oliver, Chair

The location of this meeting is accessible and reasonable accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities who require assistance. If you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact the City of Newton's ADA Coordinator, Jini Fairley, at least two business days in advance of the meeting: jfairley@newtonma.gov or (617) 796-1253. The city's TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1089. For the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), please dial 711.

Proposed or curated Topics / requests for changes to City Council Rules, 2024-5 term

Raising \$50k joint referral threshold (Article 1 Section A(6)(d))

Today, all transfers or appropriations under \$50k are sent to Finance only. Change to a higher amount (eg., \$75k or \$100k).

Defining existing processes that are NOT in the rules today

Today, the rules are silent on the process. Change would be to document the process and include it in the rules. This is not a change the process.

Similarly, we should document the Financial Audit Advisory Committee and Real Property Reuse (as we do the other committees) and include in the rules.

Reviewing departments under each committee (adding to PS&T)

Today, there is an imbalance in the departments that each committee works with – specifically PS&T has a very light load. Should we consider re-balancing?

Additionally, there have been multiple questions about which committee should work with the sustainability, climate action, DEI team items (eg., BERDO, electrification, CAP) that are within the Mayor's office.

Council communications

I believe the majority of this carryover item has been addressed with the letterhead changes for groups, individuals as signatories.

Rules, or 'Policies' ?

Code of conduct. This also has gained some attention recently. Today, there are mentions of things like attendance, limits to time for comments. There is nothing defining 'proper' and 'improper' behavior, dress code. There is nothing about what a process would like for censure or other 'behavioral re-directions'. Nor anything about who would make the determination. All of this would need to be established.

Honoring long-serving councilors. Recently, we honored Matthew Jefferson – this is the type of honor / tribute we would consider at special occasions (turning 100, serving 20(?) years, etc).

Chronic absenteeism. Additionally, do we believe that chronic absence from meetings would warrant further attention? (not that the rules currently state that every attempt should be made to attend, and to be timely. AND do we want to address standards for remote participation (camera must be on, etc)

Hygiene of the Document

There are a few items that would help the clarity of the document. 1. Clean up of table of contents (it skips back and forth), 2. We need to ensure that we document the requirement for conducting Roll call votes for hybrid and remote meetings, 3. Updating Section 12 'Executive Session' to match state law and add reference to M.G.L. c. 30A Section 21.

Submission of materials in advance of a meeting

All materials to be presented or discussed during a committee meeting must be sent to the clerk's office in time to be included in the weekly 'Friday Packet' at the latest. Materials not received in this timeframe may be omitted from the committee meeting at the Committee Chair's discretion.

Referral for Special Permits that are also seeking a rezone

The City Council's current rule refers Special Permit petitions that simultaneously propose a zoning change to the Land Use Committee. A Councilor suggests that the rule be changed so that a joint referral is made to the Zoning and Planning Committee and Land Use. They also suggest that in these situations, the LUC consider the SP only after the ZAP has voted to recommend approval of the zoning change.