

Memo

From: Mason Schirmer, Clerk-Treasurer

To: Freeport City Council

Date: January 22, 2015

Re: Request by Resident Al Williams

Request

Resident Al Williams is asking the city council to consider adding a public forum section to the city council agenda. Williams feels people should be able to come and talk to city council without making it known in advance.

Background

City Code Section 200.17 states:

An agenda of business to come before the council must be prepared by the clerk-treasurer by the Thursday immediately preceding a regular city council meeting. The clerk-treasurer must furnish each member of the council with a copy of the agenda prior to the council meeting and as far in advance of the meeting as time for preparation will permit. A person desiring to be heard by the council must make the intention known to the clerk-treasurer of the substance of the matter to be presented so that it can be included in the agenda. Matters that have not been placed on the agenda will not be considered by the council unless the council is satisfied that the omission of the item from the printed agenda was inadvertent, or unless the matter is of such urgency that the council, by unanimous vote, suspends the rules for the consideration of the matter.

Process

For the city council to add a public forum section on the meeting agenda, city council would need to amend city code; a process that requires 1) a resolution authorizing a public hearing; 2) a public hearing to be held; and 3) an Ordinance to be adopted.

Does the city council want to amend the city code to allow public forum during council meetings?

Considerations

1. Members of the public can speak a city council meetings now so as “council is satisfied that the omission of the item from the printed agenda was inadvertent, or unless the matter is of such urgency that the council, by unanimous vote, suspends the rules for the consideration of the matter.”

And

2. City Council meetings are intended for the council to conduct the business of the city; residents can contact city hall with questions, comments, concerns, and if needed, they can ask to be added to the agenda, just like Al Williams did.