



# CITY COUNCIL AND BOARDS/COMMISSIONS PROTOCOLS

Adopted 2/22/2022

## I. Purpose and Intent

Public servants have a responsibility to carry out their duties with integrity. In order to preserve the confidence and trust of the public, the Castle Pines City Council has adopted these Protocols to provide uniform guidelines to direct the conduct of the City's Council and Planning and Zoning Commission as well as any future boards or commissions the City Council may create hereinafter referred to as Boards.

Non-substantive changes to this document may be made and then distributed to Council.

## II. Meeting Protocols

- a. All members of the City Council, including the Mayor and Mayor Pro-Tem, as well as individual members of any appointed boards/committees have equal votes. No Council/Board member has more power than any other Board member, and all should be treated with equal respect.
- b. Council/Boards are composed of individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds, personalities, values, opinions, and goals. Despite this diversity, all have chosen to serve in public office in order to preserve and protect the present and the future of the community. In all cases, this common goal should be acknowledged even as the Board may "agree to disagree" on contentious issues.
- c. Honor the role of the Mayor/Chairperson in maintaining order. It is the responsibility of the Mayor/Chairperson to keep the comments of Council/Board members on track during public meetings. Board members should honor efforts by the Mayor/Chairperson to focus discussion on current agenda items. If there is disagreement about the agenda or the Mayor's/Chairperson's actions, those objections should be voiced politely and with reason, following procedures outlined in parliamentary procedure.
- d. Council/Board members with different points of view should seek to find common ground in a respectful manner to benefit the community as a whole.
- e. Council/Boards shall make the public feel welcome and refrain from partiality, prejudice or disrespect toward any individual participating in or attending a public forum. Members of City Council/Boards will be fair and impartial in listening to public testimony.
- f. If necessary, public comments received during a public meeting will be followed up by staff at a later time or as directed by the Council/Board. It is not anticipated nor expected for Council or staff to respond during that meeting unless specifically requested by the Council/Board.
- g. Written comments to City Council must include the name and address of the sender. Written comments included in the City Council's packets must be received by the City Clerk no later than 1 p.m. on the Wednesday before the Tuesday meeting. Any correspondence received by the City Clerk by noon on the Monday before a public hearing will be disseminated to City Council via

email. Any documents received after the noon deadline will be disseminated the night of the Council meeting

- h. Council/Board Members should practice civility, professionalism and decorum in discussions and debate. Difficult questions, tough challenges to a particular point of view, and criticism of ideas and information are legitimate elements of a free democracy in action. Council/Board members should refrain from making belligerent, personal, impertinent, slanderous, threatening abusive, or disparaging comments. Council expects civility among and between Council, Boards, and members of the public while in meetings. Any person who makes threatening or obscene remarks or becomes disruptive or who makes threats against any person or against public order and security while in the Council Chamber shall be removed from the meeting at the direction of the presiding officer unless permission to remain is granted by the majority vote of the Council members present.
- i. Council/Boards shall always show respect for each other.
- j. Members of the Council/Boards, staff, and the public shall refrain from sidebar conversations.
- k. Council expects all Council/Board members to keep an open mind without prejudice, to work collaboratively, openly discuss and evaluate options, and listen to the concerns of other Council/Board members.
- l. Council/Boards are expected to attend meetings having reviewed all the materials.
- m. To attain efficiency, Council/Board members should simply state their assent, rather than restating a point.
- n. Council/Board members should ask the mayor/chair to intervene if the discussion becomes repetitive.
- o. Members should feel comfortable communicating the reasoning for their voting decision. After the decision has been made, members should support the body's decision and move forward.
- p. It is improper for any Council/Board member to state or attempt to state the vote or sentiments of any absent Council/Board member.
- q. Council/Boards agree to bring non-substantive changes to items on the agenda to staff outside of a public meeting and retain substantive items for public discussion with Council/Boards.
- r. The City Council is responsible for making policy. The City staff is responsible for implementing policy.

### **III. Confidential Information**

Council members will be provided with information that is confidential within an executive session or through written communication. Disclosure of confidential information to individuals outside parties is a violation of the confidential attorney-client or other legal privilege. The privilege is held by the City Council as a whole. Only the City Council acting at an open meeting can waive this privilege. It is a breach of these protocols and a violation of public duty for any individual Council or Board member to provide confidential information to an outside third party. This protocol shall not be construed as prohibiting the City Manager and City Attorney from distributing confidential information to other City management staff to the extent reasonably necessary to implement

Council direction or fulfill their responsibilities to the organization. Any other person receiving such information is also subject to the privilege and may not waive the privilege.

#### **IV. Making Public Statements**

- a) When giving a written or oral opinion concerning issues facing or involving the City, all Council/Board members shall refrain from making statements on behalf of the City or the body upon which he or she serves unless such person has explicitly been authorized by the respective body.
- b) Any comments made by a Council/Board member at a meeting of another Board must be disclaimed to be the Council/Board member's personal views or opinions and not the official position of the Council/Board/City unless stated otherwise.
- c) No Council/Board member shall make promises on behalf of the Council/Board/City
- d) Council/Board Members should practice civility, professionalism and decorum in discussions and debate. Difficult questions, tough challenges to a particular point of view, and criticism of ideas and information are legitimate elements of a free democracy in action. Council/Board members should refrain from making belligerent, personal, impertinent, slanderous, threatening abusive, or disparaging comments.
- e) Council reports at meetings are intended to communicate to other Council members about meetings and information that are of value and beneficial to the body as a whole. Examples of this are to share information from meetings that the Council Member feels would benefit the full Council or to share information to the public on such things as events or City construction projects.

#### **V. Council/Boards and City Employee Communications**

- a) Council/Board members will receive information that is relevant to the Council/Board's policymaking authority.
- b) All City Council/Board members shall use City email for email communication on any City issues. Email communications by and among Council/Board members are subject to the Colorado Open Meetings and Open Records laws, and therefore, may be subject to disclosure. Council/Board members are reminded to refrain from communicating on public business items among three or more members to avoid potential violations of the Open Meetings law.
- c) Council/Boards should seek direction from the City Manager if there is any doubt regarding the appropriate level of contact with City employees.
- d) Council/Boards should notify the appropriate City staff members in advance of public meetings about key questions and discussion points they would like addressed during the public meeting.
- e) For routine questions or requests (e.g., code complaints, questions regarding agenda items), Council/Boards should contact the City Manager's office or the appropriate City department director with information about the request.
- f) It is the responsibility of staff to ensure evenness of information when Council members submit questions related to any aspect of Council business. The City Manager will ensure all Council are communicated to evenly.

- g) Legal questions shall be initiated through the City Attorney's office.
- h) Any Council member's request for additional information that would take a significant amount of staff time/resources shall be referred back to the Council/Board and receive a majority opinion that it merits an investment of City resources.
- i) Critical comments about staff shall only be made to the City Manager. And only through correspondence or conversation outside the public setting.

#### **VI. Council Conduct with Boards**

- a) The City Council may establish various Boards and Commissions as a means of gathering more community input and recommendations to Council. Council members shall refrain from having any ex-parte communications with Boards concerning issues and/or applications before any quasi-judicial body.
- b) Since the attendance of three or more Council members constitutes a legal Council meeting, the Council members should advise the City Clerk at least 24 hours in advance of their planned attendance at another function where discussion of City business is anticipated so the appropriate and timely public notice can be prepared and posted.

#### **VII. Council Meetings with Boards and Commissions**

- a) Council may meet with the Council-appointed Boards on an as-needed basis.
- b) The Mayor may appoint a Council liaison to any Board as deemed appropriate. The role of the liaison shall be to convey current and relevant information on Council activities and to provide input as requested. This is not a voting position, nor shall the liaison participate in the business of the Board.