CITY of POOLER
GEORGIA

POLICY/RULES OF PROCEDURE

Rules of the Planning & Zoning Commission and Public Participation
for Regular and Special Meetings

I. PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RULES

When the Meeting Chair is not present, the City Planner shall serve as Meeting Chair. When neither is present, the Assistant City Manager shall serve as Chair.

A. Addressing: Commissioners shall address the Chair with courtesy titles (e.g., "Madam Chair" or "Mister Chair" and wait to be recognized before speaking. They shall also refer to fellow Commissioners with the appropriate title or honorarium (e.g. "Commissioner Smith").

B. Presentation: The Chair may either present or request a summary of the agenda item from the appropriate staff member(s). If the petition before the body is from a member of the public, time will be provided to present and discuss the presentation from the body as well as allow for public comment.

C. Making Motions: Commissioners may make motions during appropriate discussion times, clearly stating the motion's purpose. Commissioners shall make a motion that is proper order for the item being discussed. Commissioners are encouraged to review what motions are appropriate, and when, by reviewing the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

D. Seconding Motions: Motions require a seconder to proceed; if none, the motion fails without further discussion. Seconding does not automatically denote support of the item; it merely allows for the item to move forward for discussion.

E. Discussion Timing: The Chair will allow reasonable time for discussion after a motion is made and seconded, promoting thorough consideration.

F. Amending Motions: Any member can propose amendments before voting on the original motion; however, amendments shall be discussed and voted upon separately.

G. Voting Procedures: Typically, the Chair will call for a vote which will be recorded using the appropriate device. The Chair shall only vote in the case of a tie unless otherwise provided by the Charter or applicable law.

H. Order of Business: Meetings will follow a published agenda. The Commission may from time to time add to or change items on the agenda through a majority vote.

I. Speaking Limits: Petitioners are encouraged to keep presentations to fewer than ten minutes, members of the public are encouraged to keep comments to three minutes, and the Commissioners are expected to keep their comments timely.

J. Public Input Procedures: Aside from mandated public hearings, the public is encouraged to make comment when appropriate. Rules for public participation are to be made available in printed form at the meetings. Members of the Commission are strongly discouraged from responding directly to comments; rather, all replies shall be directed through the Chair and/or staff.

II. RULES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A. Recordkeeping: Members of the public who approach the podium must state their name and address for the record and must address the Commission only; they are not permitted to address the audience.

B. Politeness: Members of the public must address the Commission with respect and courtesy.

C. Time Limit: Each speaker is allotted three minutes to present their comments or concerns, unless additional time is granted by the Chair.

D. Relevance: Comments must be directly related to planning functions, matters within the Commission's jurisdiction, or to the agenda item being discussed.

E. No Interruptions: Members of the public should refrain from interrupting Commissioners or other speakers.

F. No Personal Attacks: No personal attacks or offensive language will be tolerated.

G. No Applause or Booing: Maintain a respectful atmosphere by refraining from disruptive expressions of support or opposition.

H. Written Comments: Submitting written comments in advance is encouraged for more comprehensive consideration.

I. Public Hearing vs. Public Comment: A public hearing is mandated by State law and must accompany certain types of business. Public comment is voluntary, but afforded when possible.

J. Commission Response: The Commission is unlikely to respond immediately to public comments, but staff may address concerns at a later time.

K. Agenda Item Comments: The Chair may allow for public comment on an agenda item, but may decide to move the meeting along by forgoing some public comments if they are repetitive in nature.

L. Recording: The public can record or stream any activity within the public spaces of city hall.

M. Limited Repetition: The Chair will encourage speakers to avoid repeating points already made by previous speakers.

N. Chair's Discretion: The Chair shall have the discretion to enforce these rules and maintain order during public participation.

O. Disruptive Behavior: Disruptive behavior during public comments or the meeting may result in removal from the premises.