CITY OF TEMPLE
STATE OF GEORGIA

RULES OF DECORUM AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN CITY OF TEMPLE COUNCIL MEETING

Section One – ORDER OF BUSINESS. All regular City Council meetings shall follow an established order of business. The order is as follows:

I. Call to Order
II. Invocation
III. Citizen Comments Period
IV. Invited Guests
V. Reports from Committees and Departments
VI. Consent Agenda
VII. Old Business
VIII. New Business
IX. Mayor and Council Closing Comments
X. Executive Session
XI. Adjournment

Section Two – Rules of Decorum
Purposes:

- To ensure that meetings of the City Council are conducted in a way that allows the business of the City to be effectively conducted.
- To ensure that members of the public who attend meetings of the City Council can be heard in a fair, impartial manner.
- To ensure that meetings of the City Council are conducted in a way that is open to all viewpoints, yet free from abusive, distracting or intimidation behavior.
- To ensure that the rules governing decorum at meetings of the City Council are understood by persons attending the meetings.
- To ensure items for consideration are adequately researched and studied.

Section Three – Decorum

A. Rules for member of the council

- The Mayor or presiding officer and Council members must conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner.
- All remarks should be directed to the Mayor or presiding officer and not to individuals, council members, staff or citizens in attendance.
- A council member may not speak at a meeting until he/she has been recognized by the Mayor or presiding officer.
- The Mayor or presiding officer shall enforce these rules of decorum.
- If a council member believes that a rule has been broken, he/she can raise a point of order. A second is not required.
- The Mayor or presiding officer can rule on the question or he/she can allow the council to debate the issue and decide the issue by majority vote.

B. Rules for the speaker

The speaker will be defined as the person speaking during public comment and for or against an agenda item. (Section Four, Paragraph A and Section Four, Paragraph B.)

- The person addressing the City Council must speak on the specific item that has been requested in writing.
- The speaker shall come to the podium and state their name and address.
- The speaker must conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner.
- All remarks must be directed to the Mayor or presiding officer and not to individuals, council member, staff or citizens in attendance.
- The speaker at no time will be allowed to defame, intimidate, or make personal affronts, use profanity, or threats of violence.
- The speaker will have three (3) minutes to speak.

C. <u>Rules for the Public</u>

Members of the public shall not engage in any of the following in the meeting room during a City Council meeting:

- Shouting, unruly behavior, distracting side conversations, clapping or speaking out when another person is talking.
- Defamation, intimidation, personal affronts, profanity, or threats of violence.
- No behavior that disrupts the orderly conduct of the meeting.
- Cameras, including television and motion picture cameras, electronic sound recording devices may be used in the public section of the City Council, but only in a manner as will cause a minimum of interference with or disturbance of the proceedings of the City Council.
- The Mayor or presiding officer shall have the authority to determine whether the intensity and/or duration of supplemental lighting is such that it disturbs the proceedings of the City Council and upon making a determination require that the use of such lighting be discontinued.

D. <u>Enforcement of Rules</u>

- The Mayor or presiding officer will request that a person who is violating a rule cease the violation.
- If the Violation continues, the Mayor or presiding officer will warn the person that he/she will be required to leave the meeting room if the violation continues.
- If the person does not leave the meeting room, the Mayor or presiding officer may order any of the police to remove the person from the meeting room.
- Removal may result in suspension from attending city council meeting for 90 days.

The Mayor or presiding officer of the City Council is hereby authorized to disallow members of the public from attendance for 90 days of City Council meetings under the following circumstances:

(1) Where the person has previously engaged in egregious, inappropriate, obstructive behavior causing the Mayor or presiding officer to remove the person from a City Council meeting; or

(2) Where the person engages in behavior so hostile that the announced purpose of the meeting is frustrated.

(3) The rule enforcement begins with the adoption of the Rules of Decorum.

(a) Upon finding that a penalty in section (D) shall be imposed, the Mayor or presiding officer of the City Council shall notify the affected person in writing that he/she is prohibited from attending certain future meetings and the effective dates of the prohibition. Notification shall be served by certified mail.

(b) This section is adopted as a ban on egregious, inappropriate, obstructive behavior and is not aimed at any one individual or set of individuals nor at the content of the person's speech and expression.

(c) The person or persons disallowed from attending future City Council meetings are by no means or fashion banned or forbidden from engaging in the expression of ideas with any other member of the public on any street, sidewalk, other parts of the public buildings owned or occupied by the city, before any standing

committee allowing an opportunity for such expression to be heard, or by any other alternative channel permitted by any law or ordinance

(d) Those persons disallowed from attending future meetings of the City Council are by no means or fashion banned or forbidden from obtaining the minutes or other recorded version of those proceedings that are maintained and made available to the public

Section Four – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. Public participation in meetings of the City Council shall be permitted in accordance with the provision of this section anyone wishing to speak at any council meeting must do so from the podium, follow the rules of decorum. The individual should not speak until recognized by the Mayor or presiding officer.

(A) Public Comments. If a citizen has a request or concern regarding city services or matters relating to city governance, she/he should first contact the person/department most related to the issue. The person/department contacted will give a response within three business days. If it is not addressed, the citizen should contact the Mayor's office for further redress. If this process does not resolve the issue, the citizen may seek redressed; she/he may request the opportunity to make public comment at the next City Council meeting. The citizen must submit a written document with the specific nature of the concern, and the action or lack thereof. This written document must include the citizen's name and address. This document must be submitted to the Mayor or presiding officer at least three (3) days prior to a City Council meeting to ensure the council will have adequate time to review the matter. If public comment is requested, the citizen is permitted to speak only once for three (3) minutes on the item during public comment period. A citizen may also follow the above outlined procedure for a requested city action that requires City Council action. At the City Council meeting, the City Council may choose to add the item to the current agenda, defer to the next council meeting or take no action.

(B) Public Participation on an Agenda Item. The Mayor or presiding officer and City Council may request public comment on an agenda item for clarification purposes. All items on the agenda must be in writing. This written request should include a synopsis of the item to be considered by the City Council. No individual may introduce items on the agenda. Any person asked to speak will follow the rules of decorum. A citizen may speak for or against an agenda item during public comment by signing in before the assigned time for the meeting to begin.

Section Five – Parliamentarian The Mayor or presiding officer, when the City Council is in session, shall enforce Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised for its government, as far as they are applicable to the council, and do not conflict with the Charter or with rules set forth by the City Council. The city attorney shall serve as the parliamentarian for meeting of the Mayor or presiding officer and City Council

Adopted this _____day of _____, 2008

Attest:

_____ (SEAL) _____

CITY CLERK MAYOR, CITY OF TEMPLE

Revised 01/07/08 – Invocation
Revised 02/04/08 – Section One, Section Three; Paragraph B,
Section Three; Paragraph D, Section Four; Paragraph A