



CITY OF DEL MAR CITY COUNCIL POLICY BOOK

203	Supplemental Policy to the Del Mar Code of Civil Discourse	DATE ADOPTED:	12/7/2021
		BY RESOLUTION:	2021-51
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POLICY:

On April 4, 2016, the City Council adopted *Civility Works: The Del Mar Code of Civil Discourse* (Attachment A) which is a pledge for respectful and inclusive communication practices that foster fruitful dialogue and promote progress at City public meetings and workshops. This policy supplements the *Del Mar Code of Civil Discourse* and provides additional standards for conduct of City Councilmembers; City advisory committee members, Planning Commissioners, Design Review Board members; and members of the public at public meetings and workshops.

A. DEFINITIONS

1. “Member” is an appointed member of a City committee, commission, or board.
2. “Speaker” is a member of the public or an applicant that makes public comment at a public meeting.

B. SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDANCE TO THE *DEL MAR CODE OF CIVIL DISCOURSE*

1. **Respect yourself, the public, and fellow members**

- a) Be aware of how you represent the City as leaders in the community. As a member of a committee, commission, or board you represent the City in everything you do and say. Be professional and keep decorum of meeting throughout.
- b) When speaking, be respectful of everyone’s time and be concise. Avoid being repetitive on requests and comments.

2. **Maintain a welcoming atmosphere**

Making the public feel welcome is an important part of the democratic process. No signs of partiality, prejudice or disrespect should be evident on the part of individual members towards an individual participating in a public forum. Every effort should be made to be fair and impartial in listening to public testimony.

3. **Maintain an open mind with the public and each other**

- a) The public deserves an opportunity to influence the thinking of elected and appointed officials. To express an opinion or pass judgment prior to the close of a public hearing casts doubt on a member’s ability to conduct a fair review of the issue. This is particularly important when officials are serving in a quasi-judicial capacity. Give speakers your undivided attention and do not hold side conversations. Question from the public should be addressed only to the Chair.
- b) Ask questions of other members if you are unsure of their position.

4. **Ask for clarification, but avoid debate and argument with the public**

- a) Only the Chair, not individual members, can interrupt a speaker during a presentation. However, a member can ask the Chair for a point of order if the speaker is off the topic or exhibiting behavior or language the member finds disturbing.



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b) If speakers become flustered or defensive by questions, it is the responsibility of the Chair to calm and focus the speaker and to maintain the order and decorum of the meeting. Questions by members to the public testifying should seek to clarify or expand information. It is never appropriate to belligerently challenge or belittle the speaker. Members' personal opinions or inclinations about upcoming votes should not be revealed until after the public hearing is closed.

5. No personal attacks of any kind, under any circumstance

Members should be aware that their body language and tone of voice, as well as the words they use, can appear to be intimidating or aggressive. Address the issue, not the person.

C. ENFORCEMENT

Should the public feel this policy has been violated by a member of a City committee, commission or board, the concerned person may file a complaint with the City Clerk including the date of the meeting, name of the committee/commission/board member(s), and pertinent details related to the member's conduct at the meeting, specifically how the Supplemental Policy to the Del Mar Code of Civil Discourse was violated. The City Clerk will then forward the concern to the City Council, who may take appropriate action at a public meeting should two or more Councilmembers deem it necessary.



Civility Works:

The Del Mar Code of Civil Discourse

Together we will:

Promote inclusion

Share and respect diverse perspectives

Listen to understand

Be attentive, ask questions to clarify and confirm our understanding

Show respect

Value all perspectives and look for common ground

Be clear and fair

Explain our positions and our reasoning

Focus on the issue

Embrace the facts and avoid personalizing debate

“Civility costs nothing, and buys everything.” Mary Whortley Montagu