

Standards Relative to Public Commenting, Recording, Filming and Broadcasting During Public Meetings of the Downtown Development District of New Orleans

The Downtown Development District of New Orleans (the “DDD”) has established the following rules and procedures concerning Standards Relative to Public Commenting, Recording, Filming and Broadcasting During Public Meetings of the DDD. The DDD is authorized to adopt reasonable rules, regulations and restrictions regarding public commenting, recording, filming and broadcasting in public meetings pursuant to La. R.S. § 42:14(D) and La. R.S. § 42:23. These rules and procedures establish standards of conduct governing the relationship between the public and the DDD during public meetings and describe the procedures to be followed and implemented by the Presiding Officer of the meeting regarding public commenting, recording, filming and broadcasting.

1. Time Limits and Standards for Speakers

The DDD shall provide an opportunity at the beginning of its open meetings for the public to address the Board of Commissioners, or any of its Committees, on each agenda item for a cumulative total of up to ten (10) minutes for each agenda item. Individual speakers shall be limited to no more than two (2) minutes per agenda item. The Presiding Officer may grant or deny speakers additional time, subject to reversal by a majority vote of the Board (or Committee) members present. Speakers shall limit their comments to matters relevant to the items on the agenda. The Presiding Officer may rule that the speaker is out of order if the comments are not germane to the items under consideration. A member of the public wishing to speak on more than one agenda item shall limit his or her remarks to a total of four (4) minutes per meeting.

All agenda items that a speaker wishes to address shall be itemized on speaker card(s) or, in the case of a virtual meeting, by utilizing the chat function, with the time to be allocated to each item specified in increments of not less than one (1) minute per item. Said card must be signed by the author and time-stamped in a manner directed by the DDD. At the appropriate time, the Presiding Officer will call the speaker to address the Board/Committee, in the chronological order indicated by the time stamp or the order of placement in the chat function. If multiple speaker cards are submitted on one agenda item such that the ten minute time limit for the agenda item will be exceeded,

preference will be granted to members of the public who have not spoken previously during the meeting on another agenda item.

The Presiding Officer, in his or her discretion, may allow a speaker to combine remarks on multiple items so as to speak to them during one appearance at the podium. The Presiding Officer shall have the sole authority to grant a speaker's request to loan, cede, defer or yield time to another speaker who has not yet addressed the Board/Committee.

Speakers shall give their remarks from a location designated by the Presiding Officer.

2. Standards for Electronic Coverage

Any individual who intends to make a video or sonic (audio) recording of or broadcast live the proceedings of the DDD Board of Commissioners or Committee meeting is required to register his or her identity and affiliation with the DDD prior to or during the proceedings intended to be covered for the purpose of being assigned a position or positions within the meeting room from which the recording shall take place. No positions will be assigned by the DDD that will result either in unreasonable obstruction of the view of DDD members, staff, other individuals making video or sonic recording or members of the live audience in attendance at the Board/Committee proceedings or in an unreasonable intrusion or blockage of any routes of passage throughout the meeting room. The provisions of this policy shall not apply to any individual who is seated in the audience section of the meeting room possessing a hand-held sonic or video recording device, so long as that individual remains seated and his or her actions do not interfere with the conduct of the meeting or audience members' viewing of or participation in the Board/Committee proceedings. Actions that may be considered unreasonable conduct, obstruction, intrusion, blockage or interference shall include but not be limited to the conduct described in Section 3. Non-compliance with this policy may result in the non-complying individual being given the choice by the Presiding Officer to either come into compliance or immediately remove himself/herself and his/her equipment from the meeting room. Non-compliance with this policy may additionally result in the non-complying individual being removed from the meeting room.

3. Disturbances During DDD Meetings

In case of any disturbance or disorderly conduct, the Presiding Officer shall have the power to require the meeting room to be cleared and/or to issue orders in order to ensure compliance with the aforesaid standards. Actions that may be considered a disturbance or disorderly conduct shall include but not be limited to conduct as follows:

- (a)** Interfering with the right of any person to lawfully address the DDD.
- (b)** Displaying any signs or placards constructed or supported in whole or in part of or by wood or metal, displaying of any signs or placards greater than 18 inches in width by a spectator seated in the meeting room, displaying any signs or placards by a spectator seated in the meeting room above the spectator's shoulders or taping, tacking, nailing or stapling any signs to the walls of the meeting room. The restrictions contained in this subsection shall not apply to signs or placards used as demonstrative evidence by a speaker while lawfully addressing the DDD nor shall the requirements that signs or placards not be displayed at a height above the spectator's shoulders apply to persons with their backs along the walls of the meeting room whether seated or standing. The restrictions of this subsection pertaining to the taping, tacking, nailing or stapling of any signs to the walls of the meeting room shall not apply to informational signs installed by the DDD nor to demonstrative evidence or other material specifically authorized to be attached to the walls of the meeting room by the DDD.
- (c)** Moving or walking around the meeting room for purposes of photographing, taking video or sonic recording of or broadcasting live the proceedings of the DDD. The restrictions of this subsection shall not apply to persons along the back wall of the meeting room whether seated or standing, or to those who are acting in compliance with the standards of the DDD.
- (d)** Engaging in audible commentary unless recognized to speak by the Presiding Officer.
- (e)** Refusing to take a seat or refusing to remain silent when ordered to do so by any authorized official of the DDD.

- (f) Commission of any other act in such a manner as to unreasonably disturb the orderly procedure of the public meeting.

4. Standards for Written Public Comments

Members of the public who are unable to attend a DDD meeting in person may instead submit a written public comment to be considered by the DDD Board of Commissioners or a committee of same in advance of an upcoming meeting. The contents of any written comments shall be limited to matters relevant to the items on a given meeting's agenda. Written comments intended to harass or threaten a Commissioner, DDD staff member or member of the public will not be considered.

Written comments should be sent to ddd@downtownnola.com, either in the body of an email message or in a Word document (.doc or .docx) or PDF document (.pdf) attached to the email. The email or attachment must specify the agenda item to which the written comment relates.

In order to ensure DDD staff has sufficient time to disseminate the written comments to Commissioners, and Commissioners have sufficient time to review the written comments in advance of a meeting, written comments should be submitted no later than 9:00 A.M. the morning of a meeting. Written comments will be disseminated to Commissioners via email and by inclusion in the meeting materials distributed to Commissioners the day of the meeting.

At the start of the meeting, the Presiding Officer may ask the Commissioners present whether there is any objection to having written comment(s) placed into the record of the meeting without reading the written comment out loud. If no Commissioner objects, the written comment(s) will be placed in the meeting's minutes. If a Commissioner objects, that Commissioner may request that a specific written comment or comments be read out loud; provided, however, that the Presiding Officer in his or her sole discretion may choose to limit the length of time allocated to reading comments out loud to the time limits described above in Section 1.

If the author of the written comment is present at the meeting, he or she may speak as to the contents of the written comment or read the written comment out loud in accordance with the procedures described above.