CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS
AGENDA ITEM
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S SUMMARY FORM

DEPARTMENT: Mayor and Council

AGENDA DATE: 02/27/2024

CONTACT PERSON NAME AND PHONE NUMBER:
Rep. Chris Canales, 915-212-0008

DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED: All Districts

STRATEGIC GOAL:
Goal 5 – Promote Transparent & Consistent Communication Amongst all Members of the Community

SUBJECT:
APPROVE a resolution / ordinance / lease to do what? OR AUTHORIZE the City Manager to do what?
Be descriptive of what we want Council to approve. Include $ amount if applicable.

Discussion and action on directing the City Attorney to prepare a resolution amending the City Council Rules of Order, specifically *Section 13 – Right of Citizens to be Heard*, to specify:

that public comment received in writing ("letters") submitted to become part of the record in accordance with the already established procedure shall, upon request of the submitter, be read into the record by the City Clerk or staff designee;

and that the duration of the reading of each submitted letter shall be limited to three minutes, after which point the reading will be truncated but the entirety of the text will still be included as part of the record;

and that the reading of such letters will occur during the public comment period but after all speakers participating either in-person or remotely/telephonically have had the opportunity to address the City Council

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:
Discussion of the what, why, where, when, and how to enable Council to have reasonably complete description of the contemplated action. This should include attachment of bid tabulation, or ordinance or resolution if appropriate. What are the benefits to the City of this action? What are the citizen concerns?

This action item directs the City Attorney to prepare a resolution that modifies Section 13 of the City Council Rules of Order. This resolution will specify the process for reading written public comments ("letters") into the record, including the duration limit for the reading of each comment and the timing of when they will be addressed during the public comment period. The proposed amendment aims to formalize a procedure for reading written public comments submitted by citizens into the official record of Council meetings, a practice that was done informally until it was recently ceased.

The purpose of this amendment is to enhance transparency and public participation in the city's decision-making process. By providing a structured method for incorporating written comments into Council meetings, the proposal aims to ensure that all voices are heard and that the concerns and viewpoints of citizens are appropriately noted and considered by the Council. The inclusion of a written public comment option broadens accessibility to the public process, enabling participation from individuals who may be working during City Council meetings or face challenges accessing proceedings due to a disability, thereby fostering greater inclusivity and engagement in civic affairs.

The amendment will apply to all City Council meetings where public comment periods are designated. It will be implemented within the existing framework of the City Council Rules of Order.

PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:
Has the Council previously considered this item or a closely related one?

The City Council last amended the Rules of Order on December 12, 2023 to adjust the notification deadline to appear by videoconference in the event of an emergency in which case the member appearing via videoconference will not appear on the agenda and to clarify that the Rules regarding debate apply to deliberation in executive session and amending the Resolution to attend City Council meetings via videoconference.

AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:
How will this item be funded? Has the item been budgeted? If so, identify funding source by account numbers and description of account. Does it require a budget transfer?

N/A

_____

**********************REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION**********************

DEPARTMENT HEAD:
_____