

Guide to Winters City Council Meetings

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The Winters City Council holds regular meetings beginning at 7:30 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of the month in the Council Chambers at 318 First Street.

The meetings are televised live on the City Government Channel (Charter cable channel 20), and are replayed following the meeting on Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. Your participation at these meetings is welcomed. As City council members strive to maximize their effectiveness, they need and appreciate the informed views of Winters citizens. This guide should assist you in participating in City government.

Public Participation

The City Council encourages expression of views by its citizens on matters of concern. Writing a letter to the City Council, City Manager, or the pertinent City department at 318 First Street, Winters, 95694, is one way you can express your opinion. Another way is to make an oral presentation during the appropriate section of a City Council meeting. Items to be discussed by the City Council are listed on the agenda.

Agenda and Agenda Packet

City Council Agendas are available at the following locations:

- ▶ Posted on the bulletin board on the north side of City Hall, at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, before each City Council meeting.
- ▶ By email by sending a request to jen.michaelis@cityofwinters.org
- ▶ On the internet - www.cityofwinters.org

An agenda summary can be found in the Winters Express on the Wednesday before the meeting.

Complete City Council Agenda packets are available at:
City Hall, 318 First Street, in the City Clerk's Department

Tips on Making an Oral Presentation

To make sure you are heard, and to help increase the effectiveness of City Council meetings, please remember the following tips:

- ▶ Public comments will be accepted for items listed on the agenda when that matter is considered by the City Council.
- ▶ Citizens may speak on any issue which is not on the agenda during public comment period.
- ▶ When speaking, please step to the podium, face the City Council, and speak into the microphone.
- ▶ Begin by giving your name and address for the record. Address all statements to the City Council as a body; address all questions to the Mayor.
- ▶ Please make your comments brief, to the point, and try to avoid repeating what previous speakers have said.

City Government

Winters was incorporated in 1898. It is a General Law City organized by and subject to the statutes of the State of California. This City is governed by a five member Council, elected at large (there are no Council districts). The Mayor is to preside at all meetings of the City Council and perform such other duties consistent with the office as may be imposed by the Council or by vote of the people. The Mayor shall be the official head of the city for all ceremonial purposes. The Mayor Pro Tempore carries out the duties of the Mayor in the Mayor's absence. Elections for City Council are held every two years, with councilmembers being elected to four year terms. By ordinance, the person who receives the greatest number of votes in a council election serves two years as Mayor Pro Tempore. The City Clerk and the City Treasurer are also elected positions with a four year term.

The City Council appoints all members to the various city commissions. The City Council appoints two positions within the city organization: City Manager and City Attorney. Both positions serve at the will of the City Council to interpret and carry out Council policy. The City Manager is responsible for coordinating the many activities of the City departments and staff.

Common City Government Terms

For people who haven't been closely involved in local government, it sometimes seems as if the Council members and staff are speaking a foreign language. Below is a list of some of the terms you may hear at a City Council meeting.

Annexation: The incorporation of a land area into the existing City Limits with a resulting change in the boundaries of the City.

Assessment District: A mechanism for funding services to a specific area of the City by assessing property owners for the benefits received.

Brown Act: The Brown Act requires legislative bodies of "local agencies" to hold their meetings in public except under specific, limited circumstances where closed sessions are authorized. Public boards, commissions and councils shall take their actions openly and deliberations shall be conducted openly.

CIP-Capital Improvement Program: A 5-year spending plan for the construction or improvement of public facilities including streets, sewer and drainage systems, parks and public buildings, and other city facilities and amenities.

CEQA-California Environmental Quality Act: State law requiring that the environmental effects of a project be taken into account when considering a general plan, zoning, permits, variances, development and construction projects.

Consent Calendar: Items on the consent calendar require little or no discussion and therefore may be acted upon in one motion. Certain items may qualify for the consent calendar by virtue of being very routine or of an informational nature. Other items may be placed on the consent calendar if they have already received considerable Council review in the recent past and a consensus has been previously reached. If a member of the City Council wishes to discuss a specific item he/she may request that the item be pulled from the consent calendar and considered separately.

CUP-Conditional Use Permit: A permit issued following a public hearing, authorizing specific uses of land within the City limits, subject to specified conditions, that would not otherwise be allowed in a specific area.

Easement: A right given by the owner of land to another party for specific limited use of that land such as to allowing utility facilities like power lines or pipelines.

Enterprise Fund: A "self-supporting" fund that functions similar to a business enterprise, whereby all costs of providing a service are paid for by the revenues generated by that service.

Encroachment Permit: A permit issued by the City to allow work to be performed in a City right-of-way such as a street or sidewalk.

EIR-Environmental Impact Report: An assessment of a proposed project, required by CEQA, to determine whether it will have significant effects on the natural and manmade environments.

General Fund: A legal and accounting term designating revenues, including property taxes and sales taxes, which are not restricted to any particular use. These revenues pay for general city services such as Police, Fire, Parks & Recreation and Administration.

General Plan: Comprehensive guide and map containing policies for the long-term physical growth and development of the City.

Infrastructure: Facilities and services such as water, sewer, streets, etc., needed to sustain industrial, residential and commercial activities.

JPA-Joint Powers Authority: A legal entity created by a contractual agreement between two or more existing government agencies for the purpose of providing services.

LAFCO (Local Agency Formation Commission): LAFCO has regulatory authority over local agency boundary changes and is generally charged to discourage urban sprawl and encourage the orderly formation and development of local agencies, based on local conditions and circumstances, and planned, well-ordered, efficient urban development patterns with appropriate consideration of preserving open space lands.

Municipal Code: Document containing the laws and regulations of the City.

Neg Dec - Negative Declaration: A statement issued when a proposed project will have no significant environmental impact.

Ordinance: A law or regulation adopted by the City. Generally ordinances are introduced by council vote at one meeting, and then adopted at a following meeting. After a waiting period of 30 days, during which time it is published in a local newspaper and subject to referendum by the citizens, the ordinance becomes a law.

Planning Commission: The Planning Commission is the city planning agency authorized by state statutes. The commission reviews and makes recommendations relative to all land use decisions including but not limited to the General Plan and Specific Plan amendments, variances, conditional use permits, planned developments, tentative maps, rezoning and annexations.

PD-Planned Development: Land use zoning which allows the adoption of a set of development standards that apply to a specific project.

Redevelopment Agency: Governed by California State Law, redevelopment allows the city to identify areas of the community with defective infrastructure and stagnant or unproductive land use and take measures to make improvements. As improvements are made in the area and the property values go up, the increase

in property taxes must go back into the Redevelopment Fund. The Redevelopment Agency oversees the expenditures of these funds. The City Council sits as the Redevelopment Agency Board.

Referendum: Referendum means to cause for reconsideration. The period between adoption and the effective date of a ordinance is normally 30-days. During this period between adoption of the ordinance and effective date of the ordinance, the voters may challenge the ordinance by circulating a petition. The challenge/petition is a referendum process.

Resolution: An official City action by which the Council formally adopts policy or approves the taking of specific action. Resolutions are written documents and become effective when adopted.

RFP-Request for Proposal: A document inviting companies to make a proposal to the city on a project, and outlining the parameters of the project.

Roll Call Vote: Called by the City Council for the City Clerk to record each vote individually.

Special Districts: Special districts are formed to deliver a specific, or a multitude of specific, services to a defined area within the boundaries of the district. Limited authority underlies the specialness of special districts and sets them apart from the general purpose cities and counties. (example: fire district, cemetery district).

Specific Plan: A plan adopted by a city to implement the general plan for designated areas. It contains the locations and standards for land use densities, streets, and other public facilities in greater detail than the general plan map and text.

Zoning Ordinance: Contains detailed standards and procedures to implement the General Plan. The ordinance divides the city into various zones with different land uses permitted in each.