

January 16, 2018

Lisa Markovitz

President, The People's Voice

3205 Corporate Court

Ellicott City MD 21042

CR-10 Support with Amendment

There are several policies in CR10 that are helpful, but we disagree that the 2 minute extra time given to groups should be eliminated. Group leaders are often able to offer helpful suggestions due to hearing many issues from their members, and typically are not just being repetitive.

I suggest that defining a group, and maybe requiring an up front sign-in to get the extra time, indicating a Board of Directors authorization to speak for the group, is a better way to address concerns expressed by Council Members about rule following. HOA's have Boards and one of the biggest complaints I have heard online about this is that they have the right to speak for 5 minutes about issues affecting neighborhoods.

As for members speaking as well as the group leader, that shouldn't reduce time anyway, except for multiple Board Members, noting the group affiliation. Group leaders, given authority to speak for the group, don't even know if other members are going to show up. They have already prepared for 5 minutes. I think the majority of the issues on this particular part of this topic would be relieved by having groups defined and signing in ahead. Those who have not done that just identify as individuals, not part of the group, and then no rules are broken.

Don't punish group leaders, doing their best to give feedback within the rules, and who are clearly authorized to speak for their groups, because of concerns about unenforced rule-breaking. I suggest there are ways to enforce instead of altering, which currently appears to many a squelching action, which could be adopted by other County entities as well, having detrimental affects.

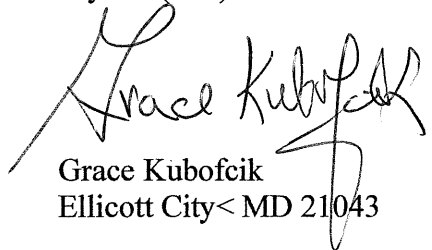
January 16,2018
Re: CR 10-18 HC Council Rules of Procedure

Chairperson Sigaty and members of the County Council:

This past year and recent legislative sessions have certainly demonstrated the strong will of the County Council to listen to all who wish to testify even when it has meant long hours and additional public hearings. This willingness has strengthened public confidence and often has resulted in changes to proposed legislation or resolutions.

I was surprised when I read the proposed changes to the current Rules of Procedure. Specifically I do not support the elimination of 5 minutes of testimony time for organizations. Professional, non-profit, civic, religious, business, agricultural, arts, environmental and other organizations have appeared and testified and using the 5 minutes to convey input from their members. Eliminating this provision will increase the number of individual members of these organizations to appear and testify. (Rule 1.012(b)(2)

The second provision you need to change is the proposal to require individuals to sign up in advance of the hearing on site that is available for at least 30 minutes before the hearing. In addition is the words "who has signed up" under public participation. (Rule 1.012 (b)(2)&(3). By adopting this language you have cut off those who come late to the issue or have been sitting in front of you and discovering based on testimony that they now want to express their point of view. Council chairs have always asked is their anyone (else) who wishes to testify. Please retain that democratic courtesy.



Grace Kubofcik
Ellicott City < MD 21043

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY
CR10-2018
James D. Walsh
January 16, 2018

I am here before you this evening to voice my concern about one aspect of CR 10-2018, namely its elimination of the 5-minute time limit for representatives of a group.

Most community representatives have learned how to present their cases effectively and succinctly. I believe that allowing a designated group representative to speak for 5 minutes actually helps facilitate Council meetings, because allowing a designated representative to speak for an extra 2 minutes may allow a citizens group to adequately address a number of issues shared by the community, and probably cuts down on repetitive testimony.

If there is any concern about anyone abusing the current system, I would suggest that they could be addressed by some other measure such as requiring written authorization from a group, or by requiring a group to register with the County and designate their spokespersons in advance.