

AN ORDINANCE TO CREATE A NEW CHAPTER 666  
OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY ENTITLED  
“PRIORITIZING PUBLIC COMMENT”

BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Saratoga Springs, NY, following a public hearing, as follows:

SECTION 1. A new Chapter 666 of the Code of the City of Saratoga Springs, entitled “Prioritizing Public Comment” is hereby created to read:

CHAPTER 666  
PRIORITIZING PUBLIC COMMENT

666-1 Legislative intent.

The Charter of the City of Saratoga Springs provides, in pertinent part, “Members of the public shall be scheduled to speak at Council meetings at times and in such manner as the Council shall establish” (Title 2, § 2.2). The City Council has assiduously attempted to adhere to the goal of full public participation in the workings of our local government. Unfortunately, however, many times the citizens who live, work, vote and pay taxes in our City are unable to participate in the public comment period at City Council meetings because most or all of the time allotted to public comment is hijacked by individuals with a particular agenda who do not reside in Saratoga Springs, who do not work in Saratoga Springs and who cannot legally vote in Saratoga Springs.

This legislation is adopted in order to allow all members of the public the opportunity to have their voices heard, while protecting the rights of those who are true stakeholders in our City to play a role in our representative democracy. In order to accomplish these joint salutary goals, this legislation aims to give priority at public comment periods to those with a legitimate personal or business investment in our community over outside individuals who may wish to express their opinions but who have no real stake in our City.

666-2 Public Comment Procedure

- a) All persons wishing to participate in the live public comment period at any City Council meeting shall, immediately prior to the meeting and not after the commencement of the public comment period, provide the Secretary to the City Council with their legal name and with written proof of Saratoga Springs residence, Saratoga Springs employment or ownership of real property in Saratoga Springs, if any.
- b) At the beginning of the public comment period, the Secretary of the City Council shall summon to the microphone in the order received: first, those residents of Saratoga Springs

who wish to be heard; second, those individuals employed in Saratoga Springs who wish to be heard; third, those individuals owning real property in Saratoga Springs who wish to be heard; and fourth, all other individuals who wish to be heard.

- c) The public comment period shall provide each speaker no more than four (4) minutes at the microphone.
- d) The entire duration of the public comment period at any regularly scheduled City Council meeting shall not extend beyond thirty (30) minutes.
- e) At the close of the public comment period, the Mayor shall announce that all those persons who had registered for public comment but whose names had not been reached shall enjoy the right to put in writing a synopsis of their intended comments and to present the synopsis to the Secretary of the City Council for inclusion in the record of the meeting and subsequent review by the Council.

This ordinance shall take effect the day after publication as provided by the City Charter of the City of Saratoga Springs, NY.

ADOPTED

Ayes        Nays

CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF  
SARATOGA SPRINGS, NEW YORK

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By: Dillon Moran, City Clerk