COUNCIL ACTION FORM — DISCUSSION ITEM NO. 1

MEETING DATE: DECEMBER 5, 2011

STAFF CONTACT: MICHAEL B. PRESS, INTERIM CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Agenda Item: Entertain a discussion regarding the draft City Council Communication Policy.

Department: Administration

Background/Description of Item:

Attached for discussion is a recommended administrative policy on City Council Communication.

City Council Communication Policy

December 2011

Section 1 Objective
Section 2 Scope
Section 3 Provisions
Section 4 Responsibilities for Enforcement

Section 1: OBJECTIVE. The purpose of this policy is to provide the City of Gardner Governing Body and Staff with a communication protocol for use during public meetings.

Section 2: SCOPE. The communication protocol is to be utilized for all City Council meetings, work sessions, and other public meetings in which the City Council participates.

Section 3: PROVISIONS:

A. Effective group discussion requires appropriate decorum and courtesy from all participants. Members should refrain from discussing others motives regarding matters that are under consideration. Individuals should refrain from speaking or asking a question a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once and has been duly recognized by the Mayor or designee.

B. Public comment is welcomed and encouraged as part of each City Council meeting. Anyone wishing to address the City Council will speak from the podium, provide their name and address, and be given five minutes to address the Council regarding matters that do not appear on the regular agenda. Comments regarding items that are part of the agenda will be allowed as that agenda item is considered.

C. The Mayor or designee may grant an extension of time beyond five minutes per speaker for public comment at his or her discretion.

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D. Any Council member who wishes to ask a question will first be recognized by the Mayor or designee. This includes questions for those at the podium, staff, or other Council members. Questions will be related to the specific matter identified in the agenda item.

E. Direction to staff to research, evaluate, or follow-up on any substantive matter that comes before the City Council is provided by the Mayor with the concurrence of the majority of the Council.

F. Executive sessions may be called after a formal motion has been made, seconded, and carried to recess into executive session. No binding action may be taken by the governing body in executive session.

G. Executive sessions may be utilized for matters of non-elected personnel, including discussions and interviews of prospective employees; consultation with an attorney on matters that would be deemed privileged in an attorney-client relationship, such as litigation and claims against the city; employer-employee negotiations; confidential data related to financial affairs of second parties and acquisition of real estate; and matters relating to the security of a public body, agency, or facility.

Section 4: RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENFORCEMENT: The Mayor and each Council member is responsible for upholding the provisions of this policy.

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