

2018
CITY OF SPARKS GUIDELINES (ADAPTED FROM WASHOE COUNTY)
FOR ARGUMENTS COMMITTEE FORMATION AND RULES OF OPERATION

In accordance with the provisions of Nevada Revised Statute 295.217, for each initiative, referendum or other question to be placed on the ballot by the Sparks City Council via the City Clerk, two (2) committees, each of three (3) persons, shall be appointed by the City Council to serve on the Argument Committees for that initiative, referendum or other ballot/advisory question. One committee shall be made up of up to three persons in favor approval by the voters and the other committee shall be made up of up to three persons in opposition of approval by the voters. Each committee shall be appointed to prepare arguments advocating and opposing approval of the ballot question and rebuttals to those arguments. These committees shall be known as the "Argument Committee For Passage of “Should the City Attorney remain an elected non-partisan office within Sparks’ government” Question" and the "Argument Committee Against Passage of “Should the City Attorney remain an elected non-partisan office within Sparks’ government” Question".

Filing dates for each committee's argument will be established by the City Clerk in accordance with the provisions of NRS 295.217.

The City Clerk has adopted the following rules regarding the formation and function of the Argument Committees:

ARGUMENT COMMITTEE PROCESS

- 1) Individuals may serve on one or more Committees at the same election but may not serve on both Committees of any single ballot question.
- 2) Each Committee member serves without compensation
- 3) The term of office for each member commences upon his/her appointment and expires upon the publication of the sample ballot containing the initiative, referendum, or other question per NRS 295.217 (3)(c), or on final review, if needed, by the municipal court per NRS 295.217 (9).
- 4) A Ballot Question Information Packet consisting of these guidelines and ballot titles and other related information for Questions to appear on the ballot shall be prepared and made available to each member of an Arguments Committee appointed by the Sparks City Council.
- 2) The City Clerk has established the date of **noon, Friday, July 6, 2018** as the date when the Argument of each committee shall be provided to the City Clerk. The Arguments will be distributed to the opposite committee by noon, Monday, July 9. The City Clerk has established the date of **noon, Friday, July 13, 2018** as the date for providing the Rebuttal statements. Arguments and Rebuttals will be submitted to the Washoe County Registrar of Voters by end of day Friday, July 20 for inclusion on the 2018 General Ballot.

GUIDELINES: ARGUMENT COMMITTEE OPERATIONS

- 1) Each Arguments Committee established pursuant to NRS 295.217 serves as an ad hoc committee. Meetings held by the Argument Committees are not subject to the Nevada Open Meetings Law.

2) Each Argument Committee shall meet and select among its members a chairperson who shall be responsible for ensuring that all arguments for or against the passage of a ballot/advisory question and rebuttals to those arguments are completed and filed with the City Clerk prior to established deadlines in order to appear in the sample ballot. The committees are not restricted in regard to the solicitation or consideration of comments from the general public or gathering information or testimony from experts on the Question being considered by the voters.

3) The Argument Committee which supports passage of the ballot issue shall then: prepare an argument advocating approval by the voters of the initiative, referendum or other question which shall be limited to 250 words, and prepare a rebuttal to the argument prepared by the other committee limited to 150 words, with consideration of the financial impact and/or the environmental impact, if known, and/or the impact on public health, safety, and welfare, if applicable, should the Question be approved or defeated.

The Argument Committee which opposes passage of the ballot/advisory issue shall then: prepare an argument in opposition to approval by the voters of the initiative, referendum or other question which shall be limited to 250 words, and prepare a rebuttal to the argument prepared by the other committee limited to 150 words, with consideration of the financial impact and/or the environmental impact, if known, and/or the impact on public health, safety, and welfare, if applicable, should the Question be approved or defeated.

4) Each argument and rebuttal must be provided in an electronic format and must be attached to the "ARGUMENT STATEMENT FOR SAMPLE BALLOT". The completed argument must indicate the specific ballot/advisory question addressed by the Argument Committee, the number of words used in the argument or rebuttal; whether the argument is being submitted in support of or opposition to the ballot/advisory question or rebuttal to the argument for or in opposition to the ballot/advisory question and signed and dated by the Chairperson of the Argument Committee.

5) Arguments and rebuttals shall be submitted to the City Clerk not later than noon on the date prescribed by the City Clerk. Additional time may only be granted by the City Clerk upon a showing of good cause. Requests for extensions of time must be submitted in writing by the Chairperson to the City Clerk prior to the submission deadline. The Committee must make every effort to receive approval of the text of the argument or rebuttal by all of the members. If all of the members cannot agree by the deadline, the committee may submit language approved by a majority of the members of the committee. The Chairperson shall indicate whether the text was approved by all of the members of the committee or a majority and sign the text. Once the Arguments Committee Chairperson has submitted the arguments and rebuttals to the City Clerk they may not be amended or changed by the committee.

6) Because of the tight timeline for completing and submitting arguments & rebuttals, it is requested that all arguments and rebuttals be provided to the City Clerk electronically (i.e. by email to tgardner@cityofsparks.us, or on a computer memory device.

7) Should the Argument Committee fail to submit an argument or rebuttal by the deadline established by the City Clerk, the statement, "Argument for/against the question was not submitted by the committee" or, "Rebuttal to argument for/against the question was not submitted by the committee" will be printed in the sample ballot in place of the missing argument or rebuttal.

8) The City Clerk will review the arguments and rebuttals submitted by the Argument Committees and reject those statements considered to be factually inaccurate or libelous. The City Clerk shall notify the committee Chairperson in writing no later than 5:00 p.m. on the fifth (5th) business day after the arguments and rebuttals were submitted that the arguments were accepted or if any arguments or parts of arguments or rebuttals were rejected.

9) If the City Clerk has rejected an argument or rebuttal or part thereof, on the basis that it contains factually inaccurate or libelous statements, not later than five (5) days after notification the committee may appeal that rejection by filing a complaint with the Washoe County District Court for the City of Sparks in accordance with NRS 295.217(9).

10) The District Court shall review the statement and reasons for the City Clerk's rejection and may receive evidence, documentary or testimonial in making a decision. No later than three (3) working days after the Argument Committee's appeal, the District Court shall issue a decision rejecting or accepting the argument or rebuttal or the part thereof that was rejected by the City Clerk. The decision of the District Court is final.

11) The Registrar of Voters shall place in the sample ballot provided to the registered voters of the city each argument and rebuttal prepared by an Argument Committee, complete with all statements not rejected as libelous or factually inaccurate. Arguments and rebuttals shall be placed under the heading "Argument For/Against "Should the City Attorney remain an elected non-partisan office within Sparks' government" Question" and "Rebuttal to Argument For/Against Question" which will appear directly under the appropriate argument. The caption statement, "Submitted by the Argument Committee in Support of Passage of "Should the City Attorney remain an elected non-partisan office within Sparks' government" Submitted by the Argument Committee in Opposition to Passage of "Should the City Attorney remain an elected non-partisan office within Sparks' government" will appear at the end of each argument and rebuttal.

12) The City Clerk may revise the language submitted by the Argument Committee so that it is clear, concise and suitable for incorporation in the sample ballot. The City Clerk will notify the Chairperson of the committee of any proposed revisions and shall not alter the meaning or effect of the committee's language without consent of the committee.

13) In its argument an Arguments Committee should address issues of the fiscal impact on citizens, if the question is adopted and the environmental impact if adopted, if relevant.

ARGUMENTS AND REBUTTALS STATEMENTS GUIDELINES

- Names and titles of committee members preparing arguments are not counted towards the word limit restrictions.
- An argument or rebuttal shall consist of words and numbers only. Graphs or charts may not be used.
- Punctuation is not counted.
- All geographical names shall be considered as one word (Ex. "Las Vegas" shall be counted as one word).
- Each abbreviation for a word such as "TMCC" for Truckee Meadows Community College shall constitute one word.
- Hyphenated words that appear in any generally available dictionary shall be counted as one word.
- Dates consisting of a combination of words and digits or only digits shall be counted as one word. Numbers directly connected consisting of one or more digits shall be considered one word. (Ex. May, 25, 2000 = one word, or 05/25/00 = one word)
- Monetary amounts or percentages consisting of a series of connected digits and denoting a value (\$, ¢, %, etc.) shall be considered one word (Ex. \$1,000,000 = one word, or .025 or 25% = one word).
- The use of capitalization shall be limited to proper names and the first letter of a word beginning a paragraph or sentence. Indentations, stars, check marks, boxes and bullets and word underlining shall be removed. Letters, words, or numbers submitted in bold for emphasis will be printed without such features in the sample ballot.

- No *Italics* may be used except when identifying publications. If Italic print is used improperly it will be changed to plain, standard font, text.
- **The total word count of an argument shall not exceed 250 words and for a rebuttal 150 words.** If an argument or rebuttal exceeds these word count limits, the City Clerk, at his/her discretion, will edit the argument to ensure compliance with the word limit guidelines.

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