

February 27, 2025

Restoring Respect and Order in Council Meetings

Dear Council Members,

I am reaching out as a community leader and the founder of Sole Folks Community Development Corporation. Through my work, I have spent years creating spaces for dialogue, collaboration, and solutions in our community. At our facilities, we engage the public in meaningful conversations that lead to real progress. I have seen firsthand that when we focus on solutions instead of dwelling on problems, we can make a real difference. Unfortunately, the current atmosphere at Council Meetings makes that kind of engagement difficult.

These meetings should be spaces for productive dialogue and problem-solving, yet they are often overshadowed by interruptions, shouting, and disrespectful behavior. This discourages participation and undermines their purpose. Our communities have suffered for too long from unproductive debates that go in circles without resolution. We deserve better.

How much longer must we tolerate this? These meetings belong to the people, and we deserve a space where voices are heard, and progress is made. They should foster discussions that lead to solutions, not chaos. If we are to move forward as a community, public forums must remain respectful and productive.

I urge the Council to set and enforce clear expectations for professional conduct. Every resident should feel safe, respected, and encouraged to participate. By ensuring an orderly environment, we can restore the integrity of our civic spaces and give all voices a chance to be heard.

It is time for action. Let's make our Council Meetings places of progress and collaboration rather than disorder and division.

Sincerely,

Akil West

Founder, Sole Folks Community Development Corporation