
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
NEW BUSINESS ITEM

TO: Members of City Council

DATE: February 3, 2009

SUBJECT:

Determining an impartial third party to conduct and facilitate the Political Debates for the 2009 Municipal Elections.

SCHEDULE FOR CITY COUNCIL ON:

February 5, 2009

ACTION DESIRED:

Respectfully requesting City Council select an impartial third party to conduct and facilitate the political debates between qualified candidates for the offices of Mayor and City Council for the 2009 Primary and General Elections.

**Jamie Bennett, City Council Member
District 5**

ORDINANCE NO. 904-G

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE IX OF THE ST. PETERSBURG CITY CODE TO ADD A NEW SECTION TO ALLOW POLITICAL DEBATE(S) BETWEEN QUALIFIED CANDIDATES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS WHICH WILL BE TELEVISED ON THE CITY'S GOVERNMENT ACCESS CHANNEL, AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

THE CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG DOES ORDAIN:

SECTION 1. The St. Petersburg City Code is hereby amended by adding a new section, 2-357, to read as follows:

Sec. 2-357 Political Debate(s) for Municipal Elections

(a) Purpose and Findings

(1) The City wishes to afford citizens the opportunity to become more involved in and informed of the municipal political process.

(2) The City wishes to present a forum to the citizens whereby qualified candidates for Mayor and City Council have an opportunity to make their views known on issues that directly affect the citizens of St. Petersburg.

(3) The City recognizes that the debates should be conducted in a manner that allows the participation of all qualified candidates for office.

(4) The City wishes to allow an independent third party to conduct the debate(s) to ensure that the debates are conducted in an impartial manner.

(b) Political debate(s) between qualified candidates for the offices of Mayor and City Council must be held prior to each contested primary and each contested general election. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Article, the debate(s) must be televised on the City's government access channel and must be open to the public. All qualified candidates for such offices will have the opportunity to participate in the debate(s).


(c) City Council, by resolution, will choose an impartial third party to conduct and facilitate the debate(s), and City Council, by resolution, will determine the time, date, and location of the debate(s).


SECTION 2. The provisions of this Ordinance shall be deemed severable. The unconstitutionality or invalidity of any word, sentence or portion of this ordinance shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions.

SECTION 3. In the event these ordinances are not vetoed by the Mayor in accordance with the City Charter, they shall become effective upon the sixth business day after adoption unless the Mayor notifies the City Council through written notice filed with the City Clerk that the Mayor will not veto the ordinances, in which case the ordinances shall take effect immediately upon filing such written notice with the City Clerk. In the event these ordinances are vetoed by the Mayor in accordance with the City Charter, they shall not become effective unless and until the City Council overrides the veto in accordance with the City Charter, in which case they shall become effective immediately upon a successful vote to override the veto.

First reading conducted on the 16th day of October, 2008.

Adopted by St. Petersburg City Council on second and final reading on the 6th day of November, 2008.


James S. Bennett Chair-Councilmember
Presiding Officer of the City Council

ATTEST: 
Eva Andujar City Clerk

Title Published: Times 1-t 10/27/2008

