CULVER CITY
CIVIL DISCOURSE GUIDELINES

(Final Version for Approval and Adoption by the Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee at it August 23, 2022 Meeting)

Before people can reach a common resolution in a group setting, such as a meeting, they need to sense that the other participants respect them, value their needs and are open to their ideas, whether they ultimately agree or disagree. If everyone present respects each other, they will be more effective and productive and enjoy their interactions. This could lead to even more effective meetings or community conversations in the future.

- **TO PREPARE FOR A MEETING OR COMMUNITY CONVERSATION**
  - Determine to follow these guidelines to the extent possible.
  - Anticipate listening to one another to reach a common resolution.
  - Try to communicate calmly; even if you are angry. Your remarks will be more effective.
  - Focus on treating all people equally regardless of their circumstances.
  - Determine to treat others as you would like to be treated.
  - Focus on showing respect to all participants.

- **TO BE A VALUABLE MEMBER**
  - Be open to other's ideas and focus on the participants as they speak.
  - Be patient.
  - Honor the need for others to express themselves by not interrupting.
  - Keep remarks relatively brief so that others will have time to speak.
  - Acknowledge other participants' contributions to the discussion.

- **TO LISTEN TO OTHERS AND BE LISTENED TO**
  - Respect the right of everyone to be heard, even if strong feelings are expressed.
  - Focus on speakers' remarks, not on your impressions of these individuals.
  - Presume that others have good intentions.
  - Avoid being defensive
  - Think before you speak
  - Be sensitive to the impacts of your words and behavior.
  - Debate the policy not the person.

- **TO REACH A COMMON RESOLUTION**
  - Support one another
  - Look for common ground
  - Be willing to compromise
  - Be willing to change your mind.
  - Congratulate each other for having reached the resolution.

- **TO RETURN TO CIVIL DISCOURSE WHEN THINGS GET HEATED:**
  - <u>Did I understand what was said?</u> Repeat the essence of what you heard, and ask if you understood them correctly.
  - <u>Am I feeling angry or frustrated by a statement I just heard?</u> State clearly any tone or language you believe was inappropriate and how you felt
  - <u>How was my statement received by others?</u> Consider asking the group or an individual the impact what you said had on them.
  - <u>Does it appear that someone was offended by my statement?</u> Ask the person to explain what they found offensive.
  - <u>Did I offend, insult, provoke, aggravate, or embarrass someone by my statement?</u> Apologize if you realize you did or said something harmful.