



Tips for Submitting Online Public Comments to City Councils*

Tapestry Unitarian Universalist Congregation's Welcoming Neighbors Home Initiative

**This tip sheet was created by Rona Henry, Chair of the Welcoming Neighbors Home Initiative, based on information presented by Tim Shaw at the United Way Advocacy 101 class, Bri McWhorter – UC Irvine speech professor, and Kimberly Adams - Housing Advocacy Program Manager, United Way's United to End Homelessness.*

- 1) WHERE TO SUBMIT: Under the City's government page, look for the pages related to City Council meetings. You may find the email on where to submit comments on that page, or related pages, or on the agenda for upcoming meetings. You can also call or email the city clerk to ask for the correct email.
- 2) WHEN TO SUBMIT: Best to submit before, or by, noon on the day of the meeting.
- 3) SUGGESTED STRUCTURE:
 - a. State your name, the city where you live and your role in the community (e.g., long-time resident, volunteer at a food pantry, concerned citizen).
 - b. State the agenda item/issue/topic you wish to comment on.
 - c. State your requested action (e.g., if you are for or against and ordinance, asking for more affordable and/or supportive housing, asking for funding for a supportive housing project, asking for zoning changes)
 - d. State why this issue is important to you. **Best if you can add a story with imagery and describe your feelings – something they will REMEMBER and/or can relate to. This part is very important.**
 - i. Example: Last week I felt like I was getting a cold. I was tired and my body ached. All day at work I just kept thinking I want to go home and crawl into my nice, warm comfy bed in my quiet apartment. Then I thought of people who don't have a house or apartment to go to, who have to sleep out in the cold on the ground. Or people who have to sleep in shelters that are crowded and noisy. They don't have a chance to get a good night's sleep that gives them the resilience they need to face life's challenges.
 - ii. **MAKE IT YOUR OWN STORY**: An interaction with someone experiencing homelessness or a friend or family member who is at risk of losing their home can be particularly compelling. But it could also be describing how you felt when you saw an unsheltered individual.
 - e. Include a relevant fact or statistic if you can (e.g., The 2019 [Point-in-Time Census](#) found there were 86 unsheltered individuals in San Clemente.)
 - f. End by re-stating your request.

- i. Consider tying the request to one or more [Unitarian Universalist principles](#) – though you don't need to state they are UU principles.
 - ii. Echo back to your story.
 - g. Thank them for considering your request.
- 4) NOTE: Keep in mind that your written comments *may become part of the public record* and be included in the minutes of the meeting – which are posted online. Do not include personal information such as street address or phone number.