# Moderation Policy

to cover editorial oversite of public
commenting on the City websites

Brief Description:

Comments posted on the City of Georgetown's website blogs are moderated. 'Moderation' is the practice of reviewing user input for a list of criteria designed to create a comfortable, safe environment in which our readers can exchange intelligent and informed commentary that enhances the exchange of ideas. 'Moderator' is the term for someone who is responsible for making sure that the discussion rules are respected.

Moderators are concerned with the quality of the discussion, not the interests of one individual, group or idea over another, **including, but not limited, to city officials, city policy or their own personal views.**

We follow the same standards for taste as many large online organizations who have been posting public comments for many years. We typically do not edit comments. If a comment contains any of the disallowed critieria listed below, it is simply deleted, even if the majority of the comment is benign.

While most comments will be posted if they are on-topic and not abusive, moderating decisions are subjective. We will make them as carefully and consistently as we can. Because of the volume of reader comments, we can not review individual moderation decisions with readers.

Comments are typically reviewed by moderators faster during business hours.

Criteria for Posting:

We value thoughtful comments representing a range of views that make their point quickly and politely. We make an effort to protect discussions from repeated comments - either by the same reader or different readers.

**Debate should be lively but also respectful.**

**Stay on-topic.** Please don't post messages that are unrelated to this online forum

**Stay relaxed.**

**Don't SHOUT** - in other words, try to use standard conventions for writing, such as using both upper and lower case letters where appropriate. No one wants to read a post in all caps.

**Be concise.**  Though you may feel strongly about a given topic, posting a lengthy comment is not likely to have more impact on the discussion than a concise summary of your argument.  In fact, lengthy posts are often skipped by casual readers.

**Don't incite hatred** on the basis of race, religion, gender, nationality, sexuality or other personal characteristic.

**Don't swear**, use hate-speech or make obscene or vulgar comments.

**Don't break the law**.  This includes libel, plagarism, condoning illegal activity, and contempt of court.

**Don't engage in "spamming".**  Please don't add the same comment to more than one forum.  And please don't repeatedly post to the same topic in order to stress your point.

**Don't advertise.**  You can mention relevant products and services as long as they support your comment.

**Don't impersonate** or falsely claim to represent a person or organization.  Please don't mislead other users by abusing our registration procedure.

If you are **under 16**, please get your parent/guardian's permission before participating in this online forum.  Users without this consent are not allowed to participate or provide us with personal information.