



LIBRARY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 20180521-5b: Rules for Petitioning/Signature Gathering at Library Branches

Date: May 21, 2018

Subject: Rules for petitioning/signature gathering at Library branches

Motioned By:

Seconded By:

Recommendation

Preserve current rule of petitioning for initiative or referendum on Library grounds as stated in the City Charter.

Description of Recommendation to Council

The current rule listed in the Austin City Charter regarding petitioning for signatures is sufficient. Rules pertaining to petitioning should not be conflated with demonstrating/protesting.

Rationale:

There are two essential issues that have been raised recently that pertain to forms of speech and where/how exercising freedom of speech can occur: petitioning for signatures and protests/demonstrations.

Petitioning for signatures can and should be conducted in a peaceful manner. In addition, for petitioning of signatures to occur, those who are advocating for signatures should have proximity to library patrons, albeit within the rules of engagement and behavior.

In contrast, demonstrating and protesting, by their nature, are more disruptive forms of speech. Nevertheless, this form of speech can and should be allowed on Library grounds in designated areas.

Demonstrating/protesting should not be conflated with petitioning. For this reason, the Austin Library Commission recommends that Council maintain the current rule in place regarding petitioning on Library grounds:

"Petitioning outside of the library building by persons pursuant to Austin City Charter article IV, sections 1 (Initiative) or 2 (Referendum), may be conducted if done in a manner that is not disruptive of the normal use of library services or property by library staff or other customers or in violation of Library Use Rules 13(A)(1), (A)(2), (A)(3), or 13(B) or 13(C)."

Vote

For:

Against:

Abstain:

Absent:

Attest:

DRAFT