

November 20, 2024 - Public Comment:

It is undeniable—we are living in the age of disinformation, where staying vigilant and engaged is more critical than ever. Eight years ago, I began my journey with this MUD, driven by a commitment to transparency, accountability, and the oversight needed to counter the rampant abuses seen in many MUDs, including our own. That commitment remains unwavering.

To empower residents and foster an informed community, I've launched a new website: **muducation.org**. This platform is dedicated to educating, informing, and engaging neighbors about the operations and decisions that shape our MUD. The site provides:

- **Meeting Summaries:** Simplified recaps of discussions to keep residents informed.
- **Agenda Analysis:** A deeper dive into key issues in monthly agendas.
- **Resource Repository:** Access to supporting documents, laws, and policies to keep everyone well-informed.

Previewing Tonight's Agenda:

Tonight's agenda raises significant concerns, not only for what is included but for what has been glaringly omitted. Missing entirely are critical follow-ups from the October 16, 2024, meeting, such as two resolutions tied to the Right to Farm Act and the Texas Agriculture Code, as well as the censure of Beth Jones. These omissions demand scrutiny, which I will address in a forthcoming analysis.

Under New Business, **Agenda Item 8(c)** is especially troubling. This item appears to challenge the public's fundamental right to participate in these meetings. That right is unequivocally guaranteed under **Article I, Section 27 of the Texas Constitution** and is further reinforced by the **Open Meetings Act** (Chapter 551 of the Government Code).

The Legal Framework Protecting Public Comment:

Section 551.007 of the Government Code allows governmental bodies to adopt reasonable rules for public comment, including time limits. However, these rules:

1. **Must not discriminate** against individuals based on their point of view.
2. **Cannot prohibit public criticism** of the governing body's actions, policies, or decisions—unless the criticism crosses legal boundaries like threats or abusive language.

The Implications of Agenda Item 8(c):

If the intent behind this item is to limit dissent or suppress criticism, it represents a direct violation of these protections. Public criticism of governmental actions is not just a right but a cornerstone of transparency and accountability. Attempts to curtail this right would undermine trust in the governing body and contradict both constitutional and legal safeguards.

This community deserves a MUD that values open dialogue, embraces constructive criticism, and fosters meaningful engagement. I urge the Board to uphold these principles and ensure residents' voices are heard.