

At the last meeting Megan stated that she didn't think there was any way to have a zoom meeting that could protect us from being zoom bombed and protect free speech. A number of us decided to do some research. We contacted friends who live in nearby cities and here's what we've discovered:

Legal protection

On August 22, 2022, Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill 1100 (S.B. 1100) into law adding California Government Code section 54957.95. Under this new section, a presiding member of a legislative body is authorized to remove, or cause the removal of, individuals who disrupt open meetings. The bill also identifies the types of behaviors which may be characterized as "disrupting" under the statute without fearing legal action.

S.B. 1100 adds section 54957.95 to the California Government Code, which allows the presiding member of the legislative body or their designee to remove, or cause the removal of, individuals who disrupt public meetings. "Disrupting" is defined to mean engaging in behavior during a meeting of the legislative body that "actually disrupts, disturbs, impedes, or renders infeasible the orderly conduct of the meeting and includes, but is not limited to, . . . [a] failure to comply with reasonable and lawful regulations adopted by the legislative body." Cal. Gov't Code § 54957.95(b)(1)(A). Before removal, the presiding member must warn the offending individual that "their behavior is disrupting the meeting and that the failure to cease their behavior may result in their removal." Cal. Gov't Code § 54957.95(a)(2). Warnings are not required if individuals are engaged in behavior that constitutes a use of force or a true threat of force.

Technology

It was also stated that there is no technological method to absolutely guarantee a Zoom bomb call will not happen again. True, however there are steps that can be taken that will protect our city. Zoom has built-in tools that can help prevent Zoom bombings from occurring, and they're all remarkably easy to enable when creating a new meeting. These steps won't completely eliminate the possibility of Zoom bombing, but they 'ensure the host has control over who is allowed to participate in their meeting.

Process

Many neighboring cities allow zoom public comments; the City of LA, Irvine, Costa Mesa and San Juan Capistrano are just a few. Many of these cities experienced Zoom bombing including City of San Diego, Sonoma and Sunnyvale. Most of these cities have adopted a new process. Residents are asked to fill out a Speaker card and submit it before the meeting. Only those residents who have returned a Speaker card in person or on line are allowed to speak via zoom on an item or public comment.

If our city adopts the new technology and participation processes, Laguna Beach need not fear legal action and we can join the dozens of cities in California who allow residents to safely comment via zoom.

The new participation process will go a long way to protecting the city! We look forward to all of our meetings being inclusive once again.

Anne

Anne Caenn

965 Katella Street
Laguna Beach, CA 92651