



Albany Parks & Recreation Operating Policy Title: Petitions and Politics Policy

- Purpose** The Albany Parks & Recreation Department frequently has individuals visit community events who are wishing to solicit signatures or distribute information for a petition, initiative, or candidate. In order to ensure public safety, provide unrestricted ingress and egress from our events, protect free speech, and provide the reasonable accommodations necessary to avoid frustrating the purpose of the event, we have established a set of guidelines and procedures that will help facilitate this process.
- Scope** Covers Parks & Recreation community events.
- Policy** We are committed to protecting free speech and making the necessary reasonable accommodations to provide prominent locations for such speech while avoiding potential public safety hazards, obstructing ingress or egress, and frustrating the purpose of the event. Albany Parks & Recreation will designate prior to the start of each event ingress and egress areas and emergency response areas that must be kept clear. Note that these may change as event size and scope changes.
- Petitioners have the right to solicit signatures and distribute information at events. Petitioners may collect signatures or distribute information in areas designated for the event only. These areas are at the main event entries and are in a prominent location. We are committed to providing a prominent location with the best visibility possible in order to ensure an individual's right to free speech is not unnecessarily impinged.
- Petitioners are responsible for any debris created by such distribution prior to the individual's departure from the event.
- Often individuals representing divergent points of view and many sides of an issue are present and soliciting signatures. We ask that petitioners treat each other as well as participants with courtesy and respect. If a petitioner believes that their rights have been violated or that they have been treated in a manner that is disorderly, constitutes a disturbance, or as in any way unlawful, we encourage them to seek assistance from the law enforcement officers on site.
- Albany Parks & Recreation Department staff members are happy to meet with petitioners prior to the event to discuss locations and guidelines.
- Petitioners have the right to wear buttons or other campaign material on their person as long as they do not obstruct their movement or the movement of others in ways that might create safety hazards.
- The primary location for free speech access during the event will be immediately adjacent to the front entrance along the sidewalks in areas that do not impede the wheelchair access. This will provide maximum visibility in a prominent location in order to facilitate free speech.
- At times, we may receive more requests for access than can reasonably be accommodated in the designated area without compromising public safety. When multiple requests are presented, space will be designated on a first come, first served basis. If multiple petitioners are present, our first avenue of accommodation is to prevent fractionalization

of petitions. All individuals representing the same petition will be asked to locate in the same area. Our second avenue of accommodation will be to divide tables to ensure as much access to free speech as reasonably possible. Our final avenue for accommodation will be to place petitioners as near the front entrance without hindering ingress or egress.

When collecting signatures or distributing information, we ask that petitioners always have a representative stay with the petition or information.

As a municipal, publicly funded agency, we do not advocate for or against any measure or candidate.

Review and Authorization

Effective date: 4/13/2022	Amended date: 4/13/2022
Parks & Recreation Director: 	