

REMOTE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY FOR OFFICIAL MEETINGS OF THE TOWN OF APEX

Following a declaration of state of emergency by the Mayor, the Apex Town Council may restrict members of the public from physically attending meetings of the Apex Town Council (“Council”), Planning Board, Council Committees, and Citizen Advisory Boards. Taking into consideration the recommendations on social distancing from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, and the Wake County Human Services, as well as measures taken across the nation and across the state, the Council may restrict or ban public access to Council and other public meetings. As usual, the Council meetings will be live streamed and will be made available on demand. The Council will limit public hearings and quasi-judicial hearings to the greatest extent possible for the duration of the state of emergency.

1. **Public Comment Period.** Comments may be made using any of the following methods: (1) using the online form provided (linked to website); (2) by sending an email to the following address listed on website (public.forum@apexnc.org) or (3) by leaving a voice message at _____. The comment will be limited to 350 words on the online form or email, and limited to three (3) minutes if made via voice message or teleconference. Comments must be sent by 12:00 p.m. on the day of each Council meeting during the state of emergency. All public comments must otherwise adhere to the rules set forth in the Apex Town Council Public Forum and Public Hearing Participation Policy, attached as Exhibit A.

2. **Public Hearings.** Comments may be made using any of the following methods: (1) using the online form provided (linked to website); (2) by sending an email to the following address listed on website (public.hearing@apexnc.org) or (3) by leaving a voice message at _____. The comment will be limited to 350 words on the online form or email, and limited to three (3) minutes if made via voice message or teleconference. Comments must be sent by 12:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting during the state of emergency. All public comments must otherwise adhere to the rules set forth in the Apex Town Council Public Forum and Public Hearing Participation Policy, attached as Exhibit A.

Citizens are still encouraged to contact their elected and appointed representatives directly via email as needed.

EXHIBIT A

APEX TOWN COUNCIL

PUBLIC FORUM AND PUBLIC HEARING PARTICIPATION POLICY

The Town Council hereby establishes the following guidelines for participation in public forum and public hearings:

- Those who wish to comment during public forum or a public hearing must appear in person. If you wish to speak, please sign in with the Town Clerk at the beginning of the meeting. The purpose of this is to make sure we spell your name correctly in the minutes and gives us a way to follow up with you if necessary.
- If you're speaking for a group, include the group for whom you are speaking, approximately how many of that group are present, and how you have the authority to do so (e.g. HOA President, designated speaker). Please designate one person per household to speak, or share the time allotment and speak together as a household.
- If you have handouts to share, please bring 10 copies and give the copies to the clerk at the beginning of the meeting. The clerk will distribute the copies for you. Electronic presentations, such as PowerPoint, require advance coordination with our IT Department.
- Present relevant comments. The topic or issue should be within the purview of the Council or town government to address.
- Avoid repetition; if other speakers before you have already made a certain point, please don't repeat those comments.
- If you are part of a group, designate a spokesperson prior to the hearing. This is the most effective way for a group to relay their comments and avoid repetition. The spokesperson may recognize the group by asking them to stand. The spokesperson for a group of four or more persons may speak for up to 9 minutes.
- Individual's comments are limited to three minutes. There is a timer on the podium. You'll see a green light for the first 2 minutes and 30 seconds, a yellow light the last 30 seconds, and a red light when your time has expired. The Mayor will politely interrupt you to remind you that your time has expired and will call the next speaker to the podium. Individuals may not yield their time to another person.
- You may raise your hand or raise your hands and wiggle them (in the manner of ASL Deaf Applause) to indicate agreement with a speaker, but please refrain from applauding and speaking out from the audience.
- This is your opportunity to provide input. This time is for you to speak and council to listen. Neither council nor staff will engage in dialog, although open questions that have clear answers may be addressed at that end of the period
- The public comment time for any item, including public forum, may not exceed 36 minutes or 12 individual speakers whichever comes first.
- Speak professionally and respectfully. Any speech or actions that are perceived as disrespectful, unprofessional, hateful, or potentially inciting or dangerous will be stopped and you may be escorted from the building.

