

PUBLIC COMMENT

REMEMBER:

- THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO INFORM THE GOVERNING BODY ABOUT THEIR VIEWS.
- THE MEETING ITSELF BELONGS TO THE GOVERNING BODY.
- THE PUBLIC DOES NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISION-MAKING. INSTEAD, IT PROVIDES INPUT TO THE GOVERNING BODY, WHICH TAKES THE INPUT INTO CONSIDERATION IN MAKING ITS DECISIONS.

TIME CONSIDERATIONS

- Establish specific periods for public comment during your meetings, in a way that is consistent with your community's expectations and customs.
- Set a length of time by which each period will conclude, unless the council votes to extend it.
- Set a time limit for each individual to speak.
- Speakers may not give their time to other people.

WRITTEN GUIDELINES

- Provide printed copies of the guidelines and expectations.
- Review the guidelines at the beginning of each comment period if necessary, and explain that this is the time for citizens and residents to express their views in order to inform the council. Explain that the council will not engage in dialogue with the public during this time.
- The council has the right to set limits on what subjects may be addressed, how long public comment will be, and how many times people may speak. All such limits must be viewpoint neutral: they must not favor one point of view over another.

DURING PUBLIC COMMENT

- **REQUIRE ALL SPEAKERS TO ADDRESS THEIR REMARKS TO THE CHAIR.**
- **REQUIRE ALL SPEAKERS TO ADHERE TO THE TIME LIMITS.**
- **THE CHAIR SHOULD THANK EACH SPEAKER, WHETHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE.**
- **IN GENERAL, IT IS BEST NOT TO RESPOND AT ALL TO PUBLIC COMMENT. HOWEVER, THE CHAIR MAY PROVIDE BRIEF FACTUAL INFORMATION, IF APPROPRIATE.**
- **THE CHAIR MUST NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES ENTER INTO BACK-AND-FORTH EXCHANGES WITH THE PUBLIC.**
- **COUNCILMEMBERS REFRAIN FROM SPEAKING DURING THIS PORTION OF THE MEETING.**
- **HAVE STAFF READY TO NOTE INPUT OR QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC AND TO PROVIDE RESPONSES AT A LATER DATE.**

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

- Model courtesy and respect and encourage members of the public to do the same.
- The public has the right to make critical and harsh remarks.
- Members of the public **do not** have the right to disrupt the meeting.
- The council may prohibit demonstrations (*booing, hissing, clapping*).