

**Zoning and Ordinance Subcommittee recommends to move to amend the Town Council Rules on Public Comments, Discussions and Public hearings by striking in its entirety Section 27 and replacing it with the following:**

## **SECTION 27: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN COUNCIL MEETINGS AND DELIBERATIONS**

The purpose of the section is to provide rules of public participation at town council meetings that allow for the council to conduct the business of the town in an orderly and efficient manner while protecting the vital tradition of commentary and feedback by the public

The Open Meeting Law grants the public the right to attend any meeting of a public body except an executive session. An individual in attendance may not address the public body without the permission of the Chair.

### **Section 1: Public Comments**

During the portion of the meeting that calls for public comment the public may comment on any topic or ask a question of the council or its government

### **Section 2: Agenda Items**

During the meeting, the public at the discretion of the president may ask a question or comment on the topic being currently debated

### **Section 3: Public Hearings**

During a public hearing the public may make comments or ask a question on the matter that the public hearing addresses.

### **Section 4: Participation**

The public shall sign in the book named "Resident Inquiries" at the podium with their name, address and question or topic. This should be done prior to or during that section of the meeting they wish to participate in. The person shall sign and write their name, address, and questions even if they do not wish to speak at the meeting.

### **Section 5: The President**

In all circumstances, the public has a right to expect an answer, if one is available from their government. To that end, the President may answer the speaker or may choose to recognize a district councilor and/or a councilors to respond or may choose to have the question answered at a later date by staff.

### **Section 6: Attendance**

The public in the case of agenda items and public comment shall be in person at the meeting. Public hearings may be done in person or remotely.

Any person upon entering the council meeting by physical attendance or virtually,

grants permission to the town council to record and disseminate their presence and testimony at the meeting.

The Chair may, in the Chair's discretion and upon request, allow a group representative more time to speak in order to avoid repetitive comments from multiple speakers and aid in the efficient conduct of the meeting. Nothing in this Section shall prevent the Town Council from inviting individuals to speak to the Council on a particular topic of interest to the Council or for the length of time.

Anyone who reads from a document, displays an exhibit shall file a copy with the Town Council Clerk.

All remarks and questions shall be addressed to the Council as a whole through the President and not to any member thereof. No person other than members of the Council and the person having the floor shall enter into discussion either directly or through a member of the Council without permission of the presiding officer.

No one shall use the council meetings for the purpose of:

1. To promote or oppose any candidate running for office
2. For the purposes relating to an election
3. To advertise for private commercial purposes or private monetary gain
4. to engage in illegal conduct
5. To use threatening language or to engage in the use of fighting words, threats of violence or other speech

At the meeting anyone making out of order comments or acting in an unruly manner shall be subjected to removal from the meeting at the call of the President.

No signs or banners of any kind shall be displayed in the council chamber.

No demonstration of approval or disapproval from members of the public will be permitted (including, but not limited to cheering, clapping, booing, etc.), and if such demonstrations are made the gallery may be cleared upon instruction of the Council President.

Public comments may also be provided to the council by providing them in writing to the council clerk by hand or by mail or email.

Member of the public seeking a reasonable accommodation to gain access to meeting; contact Council Clerk at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.