

Zoning and Ordinance Subcommittee recommends to move to amend the Town Council Rules by striking in its entirety Section 27 and replacing it with the following:

SECTION 27: PUBLIC COMMENTS/DISCUSSIONS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

The purpose of this 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. Ordinarily, public comment and participation will be permitted only:

1. If “Public Comments/Discussion” is on the agenda, during that portion of the agenda; or
2. During the public comments portion of any public hearing.

During a public hearing the public may comment or ask a question about the matter that the Public Hearing addresses.

Any person, upon entering a Council meeting or hearing for the purpose of participating, viewing, listening or testifying, grants permission to the Town Council to record and televise or otherwise publish their presence and testimony.

Public Comments/Discussion:

Participants in the meeting including the public comment portion shall not engage in:

1. Promote or oppose any candidate running for office.
2. For political 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 likely to provoke a violent reaction, are prohibited and the Chair may issue a warning or order the dismissal of the speaker.

In all circumstances the public has a right to ask and expect an answer if one is available from their government to that end. The President may answer the speaker or may choose to recognize the District Councilor and or Councilors to respond to the speaker

Conduct of the Meeting:

Anyone making out of order comments or acting in an unruly manner shall be subject to

removal from the meeting at the call of the President.

No signs, placards or banners of any kind shall be displayed in the Council Chamber by any member of the public at any time during a meeting.

No demonstration of approval or disapproval from members of the public will be permitted (including, but not limited to cheering, clapping, booing, etc.) during any portion of a meeting unless specifically invited by the Council President, and if such demonstrations are made, the gallery or public seating area may be cleared upon the instruction of the Council President.

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.

Any member of the public seeking reasonable accommodation to assist in gaining access to a meeting should contact the Town Clerk or the Town Council Clerk at least 24 business hours in advance of the meeting.

Participation:

Any person, upon entering a Council meeting or hearing for the purpose of participating, viewing, listening or testifying, grants permission to the Town Council to record and televise or otherwise publish their presence and testimony

The Public Shall sign the sheet in the book titled "Resident Inquiries". They shall print their names, address and the topic/question. This may be done prior to the meeting or before speaking. Comments shall be up to 3 minutes in length

Any speaker who reads from a document or displays an exhibit to the Council must leave a copy with the Council Clerk to be filed with the minutes of the meeting.

Agenda Items

During the meeting the Public (at the discretion of the President) may comment or ask questions on the topic being currently discussed.

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.