

PUBLIC INPUT RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR OPEN MEETINGS

- I. **The goal of Public Input is that the Board of Trustees hears all thoughts and concerns about an issue.** It is **not** about how many people can show up and say the same thing. Usually only people opposed to an action show up to comment, so it is not a “poll.”
- II. **Respectful Rhetoric is required.** Accusing the Board or staff of dishonesty (“you are obviously paid off by the Developer if you support this”) is inappropriate and will result in the speaker being asked to sit down.
- III. **Claiming greater expertise that those who have studied an issue tend to discredit the speaker.** (“I am an engineer and I know that no traffic study could really show what they claim it shows.”). A real expert would only render an opinion after reviewing all the facts and data of the study he is critiquing.
- IV. **No one can speak for another.** Therefore, attempting to “give your time” to another is just a ploy to give the second person a longer speech. It is not permitted.
- V. **Written materials that a speaker believes might be appropriate for the Board’s consideration need to be concise and submitted in advance.** Any audio-visual presentation longer than three minutes requires advance approval, and “serial sponsorship” of longer presentations is not permitted.
- VI. **Public input is not a time “to ask questions” of the Board or staff.** Real questions, asking for information or data, can be directed to staff before or after. If the issue is “I could only support this if “x” were true”, simply state that fact.
- VII. **Name calling couched as questions, (“Why are you all such lying cowards”) falls under principle #2, and will result in the speaker’s time being terminated.**
- VIII. **Respectful hearing of speakers with whom you disagree is part of the process.** This is not a melodrama. Hisses and catcalls, or cheers for ideas you agree with are all inappropriate.
- IX. **No person shall make any complaints about or charges against any Town staff members during public comment.** Public comment is not for personnel issues a citizen has with the Town.
- X. **All comments shall be addressed to the Board as a whole and not to any individual Board Members.** It is not a conversation – it is a chance to make a statement for the consideration of the entire elected body.
- XI. **No person shall make any personal, impertinent, profane, insolent, slanderous remarks.**
- XII. **Public comment is not for Town employees or currently serving members of the Board of Trustees or Planning Commission.**