

Easttown Township

Public Comment Rules and Procedures for:

- (1) Planning Commission (PC) Meetings and
- (2) PC Receipt of Public Comment Outside of Public Meetings.

Overall:

The Planning Commission welcomes and values the various points of view expressed by members of the public. The public has the opportunity and right to listen to and speak at Planning Commission meetings. Outside of public meetings, members of the public can send written comments to the Planning Commission.

Compliance with the meeting and public comment protocols is expected and appreciated. We encourage citizens to familiarize themselves with these protocols prior to offering public comment.

- At its public meetings, the PC provides multiple opportunities for “public comment,” which is the time in which members of the public can speak to a matter under consideration by or relevant to the work of the Planning Commission. The public has the right to comment on items listed on the agenda as they arise at the meeting, and the opportunity to speak in the “Public Comment” portion of the agenda on matters that are not listed on the agenda (though again, only those matters related to the work of the PC). This portion of the agenda usually occurs towards the end of the meeting agenda.
- Members of the public who want to send correspondence to the Planning Commission should send emails to easttown@easttown.org or letters to Easttown Township, Attention: Planning Commission, 566 Beaumont Road, Berwyn, PA 19333. Please reference the Planning Commission and the matter you are commenting upon in your document.

PC Public Meetings:

1. **Length and Nature of Public Comments:** In order to ensure that everyone has the right to participate in a public meeting, the PC may reasonably limit the length and general nature of public comments.
 - a. Public participation (aka “public comment”) during a PC meeting may be limited to three (3) minutes per person. An individual’s time may not be given or traded to other speakers or reserved for other portions of the meeting. A representative speaking on behalf of an organization, including but not limited to a: civic association, homeowners association, chamber of commerce, governmental entity, or the like, may be given five (5) minutes. Only one person will be allowed five minutes to speak as a representative of a given organization.
 - b. The PC Chair, or the presiding officer, shall act as timekeeper or shall designate another official as timekeeper.
 - c. Comments must relate to the purpose of the public meeting or to legitimate business before the PC.
 - d. Speakers shall address all comments to the Planning Commission as a whole and not to individual Commissioners or to members of the public.

- e. Members of the PC, speakers, and audience members must observe proper decorum. Any statements made during the meeting by members of the PC, Township officials or employees, or members of the general public, shall not involve personal or slanderous attacks on individuals, regardless of whether the individual so attacked is an elected or appointed official, a Township official or employee, or a member of the general public.
 - f. The PC reserves the right to not engage in a dialogue with a commenter, including the right not to engage in a question and answer session on matters on which a motion has been made.
 - g. The Planning Commissioners may assign staff to provide information requested by a person speaking during the public comment period. If readily available, the information could be provided during the meeting, or an answer provided by staff in the following business days or weeks.
2. Sign-In Sheets for Members of the Public at In-Person Meetings: Any person wishing to speak at a public meeting must sign in upon entering the room, when such sign-in sheet is available, indicating his or her intention to speak, which sheet will be used by the PC Chair or the presiding officer to recognize speakers.
 3. Members of the Public Speaking at Remote Meetings: When the PC Chair or presiding officer opens and announces a public comment opportunity, any individual wishing to speak shall raise his or her hand (by using the “raise hand” feature of the online platform, or by following the instructions provided if participating via a phone call). When recognized by the PC Chair or the presiding officer, the individual must state his or her name and address, and if appropriate, group affiliation and must state the subject he or she will be addressing.
 4. Order of Speakers from the Public: Speakers will be called in the order they are listed on a sign-in sheet, or are listed on an on-line meeting platform.
 5. Enforcing the Rules:
 - a. The Chair is responsible for maintaining order. Failure to abide by this guidance may result in the forfeiture of the speaker’s right to speak.
 - b. If the PC Chair or the presiding officer fails to enforce the rules set forth above, any member of the PC may move to require him or her to do so, and an affirmative vote of a majority of the PC shall require him or her to do so.