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Policy #

Public Comment Guidelines for Meetings of Township Authorized Groups

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Scope:

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1. The members of the Township's Authorized Groups welcome and value various points of view when respectfully expressed by the members of the public.
2. The public has the opportunity to attend, observe, listen and participate at the Township's Authorized Group meetings.
3. All members of the Township's Authorized Groups, presenters, and meeting attendees must observe proper decorum. Any statements made during the meeting by members of the Township's Authorized Group, Township officials, Township employees, and members of the public shall not involve or include personal or slanderous attacks.
4. It is expected that public comments at meetings of the Township's Authorized Groups relate to agenda items or other topics under the purview of the specific Township Authorized Group.
5. These guidelines do not apply to meetings and hearings of the Township Zoning Hearing Board, as those meetings and hearings are governed by a rules and regulations promulgated by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

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Procedure

1. At public meetings of the Township's Authorized Groups, there will be opportunities for "Public Comment". The public can comment on items listed on the agenda, when called upon, as they arise at the meeting, as well as at the "Public Comment" portion of the meeting's agenda on any items. The public comment portion of the agenda usually occurs toward the end of the meeting agenda.

2. Regardless of when or as to what a member of the public offers public comment, all individuals who wish to provide public comment must first provide the Township Authorized Group with their name and address.
3. Members of the public who wish to send correspondence to a Township Authorized Group should address e-mails to: easttown@easttown.org or mailed letters to Easttown Township, 566 Beaumont Road, 19333. In doing so, members of the public should note to which Township Authorized Group(s) the correspondence should be directed.
4. To ensure that written correspondence transmitted to a Township Authorized Group is included in the advanced, prepared materials for the Township's Authorized Group's meeting, such correspondence must be received by the Township no later than noon the Wednesday preceding the following week's public meeting for which the correspondence relates. Untimely correspondence received after the preceding Wednesday deadline will be included within the prepared materials for the Township's Authorized Group's subsequent public meeting (and is not guaranteed inclusion within the Authorized Group's next meeting's materials).
5. In order to ensure that everyone who so desires is afforded an opportunity to participate in a public meeting of a Township Authorized Group, the Township Authorized Group may reasonably limit the length of time allocated to public comments, and may request that public commentary be limited to matters presently before that Township Authorized Group.
6. Public Comment during a Township Authorized Group meeting may be limited to three (3) to five (5) minutes per person, per agenda item/subject matter. An individual's time may not be given or traded to, nor combined with other speakers' time, nor may such time be preserved for other portions of the public meeting. The Township Authorized Group's Chairperson of the meeting may allow more time to all individual speakers or to a representative of a given organization. An organization representative, speaking on behalf of an organization, includes, but is not limited to a: civic association; homeowners association; chamber of commerce; governmental entity; or the like.

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Deleted: , may be given five to six minutes. The Township Authorized Group's Chair or presiding officer may decide to allow more time to all individual speakers or to a representative of a given organization.

7. The Township Authorized Group Chair of the meeting shall act as timekeeper for public commentary or shall designate another member of the Township Authorized Group, staff liaison or solicitor, for such timekeeping.
8. The Township Authorized Group reserves the right not to engage in dialogue with a public commenter, including the right not to engage in a question and answer exchange on matters in which a motion has been made.
9. For Township Authorized Group meetings that are held exclusively or partially on remote platforms, the same public comment guidelines provided herein shall be utilized. When an individual who is participating in a public meeting remotely desires to speak, the individual shall raise their hand within the remote meeting platform and wait to be recognized by the Township Authorized Group Chair or the meeting organizer before speaking.

Adopted Date: _____

Last Revised Date: _____

Last Reviewed Date: _____

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- Deleted: <#>It is expected that Public Comments relate to the topic or issue being considered.¶
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- Deleted: <#>When a sign-in sheet is available for any individual wanting to speak at a Township Authorized Group meeting, the individual must sign up upon entering the room or before the meeting begins. The sheet will be collected before the meeting begins and handed to the Township Authorized Group Chair or the presiding officer and will be referenced to recognize speakers.¶
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- Deleted: <#>The Township Authorized Group Chair or the presiding officer fail to enforce the rules set forth above, any member of the Township Authorized Group may move to require him or her to do so. An affirmative vote of the majority of the Township Authorized Group shall require him or her to do so. ¶