

TOWN OF SNEADS

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY

The Town of Sneads is committed to democratic, participatory local government that seeks to involve citizens in the decision-making process. The purpose of this policy is to establish a formal process and procedures for obtaining citizen input and allowing citizen participation at official Town Council Meetings.

Meeting Decorum

Sneads Town Council Meetings are formal governmental meetings that are conducted to transact public business. In conducting business, the Town Council is committed to the principles of civility, honor, and dignity. Individuals appearing before the Town Council are requested to observe the same principles when making comments on items and issues presented to the Town Council for their consideration. The Sneads Town Council has historically used Roberts Rules of Order as its parliamentary guide for conducting meetings. The Presiding Officer has the right to call for order or rule anyone out of order who does not follow the prescribed rules and procedures of this policy.

All persons appearing before the Town Council are required to state their name and address for the public record. All comments must be made from the podium which is located at the front of the Town Council Chambers or by other reasonable accommodations and shall address the subject of the agenda item. The purpose of this requirement is so that the recording equipment can record the comments made so that they are properly reflected in the Council minutes and are available for future reference. Town Council Members, Town staff members, and citizens are required to use proper language when addressing the Council or the audience. They must refrain from using profanity or cursing, aggressive or threatening behavior when addressing the Town Council or other participants. All comments are directed to the Presiding Officer and not to individual members of the Town Council or to the audience. No personal verbal attacks toward any individual, by either the Town Council, staff, or citizens will be allowed during the Town Council Meeting. The Presiding Officer may have individual(s) removed from the Town Council Chambers if such conduct persists after a warning has been issued.

All Town Council members, Town staff, and citizens must be recognized by the Presiding Officer before speaking or asking questions. The purpose of this requirement is so that the meeting is conducted in an orderly fashion and so that the recording equipment will properly record all comments made by individuals wishing to comment on a specific subject.

Participants shall adhere to their allotted time as provided in this policy and may submit written documents in order to fully address their concerns with the Council.

Methods for Citizens to Participate in Town Council Meetings

The Town Council will not allow public input regarding complaints about routine business items that can be handled by the Town Manager, Town Clerk, Police Chief or other Town employees. If a citizen has not had a satisfactory response from the proper Town employee with regard to routine business items, then the citizen should contact the Town Council member liaison for the appropriate department. If the complaint is still unresolved, the citizen may request by letter to the Town Manager no later than one week prior to the next regular Town Council meeting, that the item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

The Town Council provides several methods for citizens to address issues at official Town Council Meetings. Those methods are:

- ◆ Regular Agenda Items
- ◆ Individual Agenda Items
- ◆ Submission of Petitions
- ◆ Public Hearings

Regular Agenda Items

Any Citizen who wishes to speak to an agenda item must fill out an agenda card with their name, address, company or organization name if applicable, and the agenda item to be addressed. All cards will be submitted to the Presiding Officer of the meeting prior to the beginning of the meeting. After the meeting is called to order, the Presiding Officer will issue a last call to submit agenda cards. Only those persons who have submitted an agenda card will be allowed to speak. The Presiding Officer will call upon those individuals who wish to speak in the order that the cards are received. Each person who wishes to speak must do so from the podium. Please state your name and address for the record. All comments must address the subject matter stated on the agenda card in reference to that particular agenda item. Please conduct yourself politely. No profanity or insulting language will be tolerated. A reasonable amount of time of approximately three minutes will be allowed for each person to speak. No time will be allotted for rebuttal.

Individual Agenda Items

The second method is for the citizen to request in writing to appear on the Town Council meeting agenda and file such request with the Town Clerk's Office a minimum of one week in advance of the Town Council Meeting. The letter shall state the nature of the request and ask that the item be placed on an upcoming Town Council meeting agenda. A copy of the letter will be provided to Town Council on the day that it is received by the Town staff. A copy of the letter will be provided to the proper Town Department so that research can be conducted and information provided to the Town Council as part of the agenda. This will give staff time to prepare a staff report and provide additional data to the Town Council in order for the Town Council to decide if the item will be placed on the agenda.

Once the request for addition to the agenda has been approved by the Town Council, the individual making the request and the Town staff shall be given all the time that is necessary to make the presentation. Any other individual(s) who wish to address the Town Council in either support or opposition will be limited to a 3 minute presentation.

Submission of Petitions to the Town Council

Petitions may be submitted as part of another presentation or to address a particular agenda item. When submitting petitions to the Town Council which are not related to another agenda item, the petition should clearly state the topic. The individual who is presenting the petition to the Town Council should give it to the Presiding Officer at the beginning of the presentation and provide a brief overview of the petition. The presentation must be limited to three minutes. The Town Council will accept the petition and will schedule the item for discussion on the next available agenda.

There are occasions where petitions are submitted to the Town Council through the mail or brought into the Town offices. When petitions are received by the Town in this way, a copy of the petition will be presented to the Town Council and will be placed on the next available meeting for discussion by the Town Council.

Public Hearings

Public Hearings are formal, often legally noticed hearings which the Town Council conducts pursuant to State or Federal Law. Some public hearings are advertised hearings for specific items scheduled on the Town Council agenda. Some public hearings are quasi-judicial while others are legislative in nature. Some public hearings have specific formats which must be followed and are established by law. Most ordinance considerations are conducted as formal public hearings and are normally considered as a regular agenda item. In those cases, the Presiding Officer will announce that this is a public hearing.

The applicant may have as much time as necessary to make the presentation before the Town Council. Town staff may have as much time as necessary to make a presentation on the subject before the Town Council. Citizens other than an applicant, who wish to address the Town Council may do so by completing an agenda card prior to the beginning of the meeting, and by waiting to be recognized by the Presiding Officer. All individuals addressing the Town Council will clearly state their name and address for the record.

Citizens will be limited to 3 minutes per person, unless the time is extended by a majority of the Town Council.

The order of the Public Hearing will be as follows:

- ◆ Presentation by Town Staff
- ◆ Questions of the Town Staff by the Town Council
- ◆ Presentation by the applicant, if applicable
- ◆ Questions of the applicant by the Town Council
- ◆ Opportunity for applicant and staff to question other witnesses
- ◆ Comments from interested parties
- ◆ Questions of Citizens by the Applicant, if applicable
- ◆ Final Comments by Applicant, if applicable
- ◆ Discussion by the Town Council (Town Council Members may request additional information from both the applicant and staff during this phase of discussion)
- ◆ Decision by the Town Council

Documents

All documents submitted to the Town Council become public records when given to the Town Council for their consideration and shall be maintained by the Town Clerk in accordance with the public records law.

Adopted by the Town Council of the Town of Sneads in Regular Session on

February 09, 2010.



Signature of Town Council President