

GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC INPUT AT VILLAGE MEETINGS

The Village of Howards Grove protocol for public hearings and public input is one of respect for the process and for others. Decorum shall always be maintained, using appropriate language, dignified behavior and non-abusive comments. Use of inappropriate or foul language is not permitted.

If there are times you have a concern about something in the Village, we encourage you to discuss them with Village staff or an individual member of the Board prior to attending a meeting. The issue may be able to be resolved, or there may already be a solution in place that you are unaware of.

However, if you do not feel your issue is resolved at that level, your next step may be to bring the concern before the Village Board at a meeting.

There are two types of government meetings:

- ***Meetings open to the public***

Village Board and Committee meetings are meetings open to the public. At these types of meetings the public is welcome to observe and listen, but except for the “Public Comment” section of the agenda, are not typically invited to speak.

- ***Public hearings***

Public hearings are a special kind of government meeting where the purpose is to gather input on a particular topic from those in attendance. Examples include hearings on a rezoning or conditional use application, the Village budget, or other specific topics.

In order to ensure that everyone who wishes to speak has an equal opportunity to do so in a limited amount of time, please keep the following in mind:

1. The Chair will call upon those who wish to speak.
2. Please limit your comments to no more than three (3) to five (5) minutes. If a previous speaker addressed your comment, please do not repeat remarks or points already made.
3. Comments should be directed to the Board/Commission as a body---not to individual members, staff members, or other members of the audience.
4. Comments should not include personal attacks directed at any individual or group.
5. Vulgar or abusive language will not be tolerated.
6. After you have spoken, the governing body may ask questions for clarification, but will **not debate the topic with the speaker.**

In addition, there are some specific guidelines for the two types of government meetings. Please refer to the appropriate set of guidelines on the back of this sheet.

Guidelines for meetings open to the public:

Due to the limited nature of input at these meetings, if you have a topic you would like to address with the Board, you have two options:

1. You may complete a Public Comment Registration Form and address the Board during the **Public Comment** portion of the agenda. Please note that no action can be taken by the Board, although they may ask questions for clarification or refer your topic to Village Staff or a Committee for further review. You may do this the night of the meeting.
2. If your topic is more in-depth or you would like the Board to take action on your topic, you should contact the Clerk-Treasurer's office to be placed on the **Agenda**. You will be able to address the Board, and the Board may discuss, ask questions, and take action on your topic. You must request this by the Friday prior to the meeting.

If you choose to address the Board during the **Public Comment** portion of a meeting, please complete the Public Comment Registration Form (located on the table upon entering the Board Room). Prior to the start of the meeting, turn in your completed form to the Village Clerk-Treasurer. When the Board comes to the Public Comment item on the agenda, the Chair will call upon those who have completed a form.

If you change your mind about speaking after filling out the form just tell the Chair when called upon that you have had your question answered or you no longer wish to speak.

Guidelines for Public Hearings:

The following guidelines are in effect for **Public Hearings**:

1. Please limit your comments to only the topic of the hearing.
2. Written comments for public hearings, if you are unable to attend and want them read into the meeting record, must be at the Village Hall by 5:00 p.m. on the meeting night.
3. Following the presentation of information on the topic of the hearing, the Chair will invite those present to provide testimony in support of, or in opposition to, the topic.
4. The Board, or an applicant in the case of a rezoning or permit request, may respond to specific questions or statements made by the public.
5. The Chair will close the public hearing after all information has been presented and all comments are received; if additional information or comments are pending, the Board may continue the public hearing to another date.
6. The Board may discuss the topic, however, there are no further public comments taken. The public is allowed to remain and listen or may leave at any time.
7. Action by Board/Commission to approve, deny or table to a later date may be taken.