

Policy # 22-03

Adopted: 11-22-22

Rules of Public Comment and Participation at Township Board and Commission Meetings

The Caledonia Township Board recognizes the value of public comment during public meetings regarding Township issues, and the general importance of allowing members of the public to express themselves on matters of community interest. However, there as well exists the need that the Township meetings be run efficiently and effectively for the benefit of the Board, its various Commissions, and the public alike. To this end, the following rules shall apply relative to all public comment at all Township Boards and Commission meetings subject to the Open Meetings Act, and at which public comment is allowed.

The intent of these rules is:

1. To allow members of the public a fair and adequate opportunity to be heard, while not compromising or impeding the efficient and effective conduct and administration of the meeting;
2. To grant the Township Supervisor and/or the presiding member of any other Township Board or Commission the authority to deny, prevent or curtail comment on a particular subject. Such denial shall, to the extent practicable, be based on a determination by the Township Supervisor and/or presiding member of the Township Board that the request or comment is frivolous, harassing, repetitive/redundant, unreasonably disruptive or otherwise not reasonably appropriate for discussion at the time and/or manner requested or promulgated.
3. To provide adequate time for the Board to obtain necessary information, conduct fact finding and/or give adequate and appropriate consideration to any matter brought to the Board's attention, or upon which comment is desired, by a member of the public.

General Rules Relative to Public comment:

1. In all Board and Commission meetings at which public comment is an agenda item, such public comment may be given by an individual person, and shall be limited to three (3) minutes in duration. Additional time may be afforded by the Township Supervisor, Chairperson or other presiding member of the Township Board or Commission if such presiding member determines the same to be reasonably in the public's and the Board's/Commission's best interests.
2. No individual may speak more than once on the same topic.

3. If an entity or group of persons interested in a topic wish to give public comment, only one (1) representative of such entity or group may comment on such topic.
4. Public comment is not a question and answer or discussion period. It provides individuals with an opportunity to express their comments regarding any subject matter. All comments shall be directed only to the presiding member of the Township Board or Commission; no person may address or question Board or Commission members individually.
5. The Board or Commission will not respond to comments made during the public comment period unless, in the reasonable discretion of the Supervisor, Chairperson or other presiding member, it becomes necessary or to the benefit of the Board or Commission to ask a clarifying question, correct a factual error, or provide specific factual information.

The presiding member of the Township Board or Commission may, without limitation **:

- interrupt, warn, or terminate an individual's comment session when the presentation exceeds the allotted time, or is or becomes unreasonably abusive, insulting, ad hominem, vulgar or obscene, disruptive, or irrelevant to the topic at hand;
- request that any individual leave the meeting if that individual fails to constrain and/or conduct themselves in accordance with these Rules;
- request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly or disruptive individual;

** Nothing contained herein shall be deemed, interpreted or construed as to any extent modifying or limiting the powers and authority of the Supervisor as provided in the Michigan Townships Act, including without limitation MCL §§41.2 (4) and 41.72a, *et seq.*