

**Rules for Public Participation
at Town of Clayton
Board Meetings
Dated October 31, 2008, Revised June 9, 2010**

The Clayton Town Board meets in public, as required by law, so that town residents may observe their local government at work. Under the provisions of law, the public does not have a right to speak or participate in the Board's decision making unless the subject matter is one that requires public input through either the hearing process or by referendum. Therefore, public participation at meetings is a privilege granted by the Town Board in order to obtain public input so that the Board can better perform its governing function. As a result, the Board is establishing policies with respect to orderly participation so that everyone has an equal opportunity to be heard in the time available. In order to maintain order and to preserve the legal distinction inherent with a Government meeting, Public Discussions are subject to the following rules:

Public Discussion periods:

1. There is no legal requirement to open a meeting to Public Discussion. A member of the Town Board shall make a motion to open and/or close a meeting to Public Discussion, which must be seconded and then approved by a majority of the Town Board (3 yes votes). Nothing in these rules shall be construed as to prevent additional public discussion periods during a Town Board meeting, subject to a motion.
2. The first Public Discussion period will generally occur after the approval of the minutes from the prior meeting, and shall be restricted to comments about issues on the current agenda for that meeting. Comments about issues that are not on the current agenda shall NOT be accepted.
3. The second Public Discussion period will generally occur at the end of the Town Board meeting. Comments during the second Public Discussion period shall broadly address Town of Clayton Government activities and issues. This section shall not be construed to limit or prevent a speaker from petitioning the Town Board to pass a resolution expressing an opinion or sentiment about a non-local issue, or an issue not within the direct purview of the Town Board.
4. If a member of the public violates these rules, the Town Supervisor or other presiding officer shall call that member to order and shall explain the rules. If a member of the public fails to follow the directions of the presiding officer, that person shall be prevented from speaking further. In extreme cases, the Town Board may adjourn, and may refer the matter to a police agency.
5. Upon motion of the Town Board, the privilege of the floor can be withheld on a particular subject if there is no active action related to that subject pending with the Town Board. However, the Town Clerk may receive written statements and presentations on the subject, which will be shared with the Town Board.
6. The decision of the Town Supervisor or presiding officer with regards to these rules shall be final.

Public Speakers:

1. A member of the public who wishes to speak during Public Discussion shall prepare a "request to address the Board" and wait to be recognized by the presiding officer of the Board. Upon recognition, the member of the public shall proceed to the public podium or microphone and shall state his/her name and address for the record prior to proceeding further.
2. Each person shall be allowed three (3) minutes to speak in accordance with these rules, provided that such time may be extended by majority vote of the Board. All comments, statements and questions shall be addressed to the Town Board. There shall be no interaction with other members of the audience. At the end of the allotted time, the presiding officer shall notify the speaker, by use of a gavel or by other means, which their time has expired, and the speaker shall return to his/her seat without further comment.
3. No person shall be allowed to speak a second time until all members of the public have had an opportunity to speak at least once. No person shall be allowed to speak more than twice during a Public Discussion period.