



PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD & PUBLIC HEARING POLICY RULES OF DECORUM

The Town of Nashville Town Council is committed to allowing members of the public an opportunity to offer comments and suggestions for the efficient and effective administration of government. In addition to public hearings, a public comment period is set aside for the purpose of receiving such comments and suggestions at the Town Council's Regular Meetings. A Public Comment Period will not be held during Special "Called" Meetings unless authorized by the Mayor. These Rules of Decorum are not intended to limit the content of any speaker's message, but to ensure that the meeting is conducted in a civil, productive, effective and orderly manner. All comments and suggestions addressed to the Town Council during the public comment period shall be subject to the following:

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

- 1) The public comment period shall be held at the beginning of the Town Council's Regular Meetings. The comment period will be limited to a maximum of thirty (30) minutes. At the discretion of the Council, this time may be extended as circumstances warrant.
- 2) Persons who wish to address the Council during the public comment period will register on a sign-up sheet located on the podium at the front of the Council Chambers. Speakers will provide contact information and the topic of their comments on the sign-up sheet. Sign-up sheets will be available twenty (20) minutes before the start of the meeting. No one will be allowed to have their name placed on the list by telephone or email request to town staff.
- 3) If a person arrives after public comment has begun and desires to address the Council, they may do so after those who have signed up have addressed the Council, assuming time is available.
- 4) Each speaker will have three (3) minutes to make their remarks. Each speaker will be allowed to speak one time during the public comment period. Speakers may not yield time to another person. If a group wishes to speak, the group will be instructed by the presiding officer to designate a maximum of two spokespersons to speak on behalf of the group. A "group" is defined as more than two people in attendance wishing to address a similar topic. It is recommended that groups or delegations select their spokesperson in advance of the meeting.
- 5) Speakers will be acknowledged by the Mayor in the order in which their names appear on the sign-up sheet. Speakers will address the Council from the podium at the front of the room and will begin their remarks by stating their name.
- 6) Public comment is not intended to require the Council to answer impromptu questions. Speakers will address **all** comments to the Council as a whole and not to one individual Council member. Discussions between speakers and members of the audience will not be allowed. Discussions between speakers and members of the Council will not be allowed.

PUBLIC HEARING

Speakers may only speak on the matter defined in the public hearing notice. All other comments must be made during the regular public comment period.

- 1) Each speaker shall state their name clearly.
- 2) Each speaker will be allowed to speak one time during the public hearing.
- 3) Due to time constraints, it is requested that each speaker limit their comments to five (5) minutes regarding the subject of the public hearing, unless otherwise authorized by the presiding officer.
- 4) Speakers with handouts to share should bring ten (10) copies, and give the copies to the Clerk as they approach the podium. **Do not** approach Council with the handouts; the Clerk will distribute the copies.
- 5) Any videos, PowerPoint presentations, or other electronic media must be provided to the Clerk no later than four (4) working days before the meeting.
- 6) Speakers shall be civil and courteous in their language and presentations at all times. Speakers are asked to refrain from personal attacks and/or threats directed toward any Council member, the Mayor, City staff, and/or members of the public; vulgar or profane language or gestures will not be tolerated.
- 7) Speakers are asked to address the Mayor and Council and to refrain from addressing the audience.
- 8) The Mayor, or presiding officer, has the authority to enforce the Rules of Decorum; failure to obey these rules may result in a forfeiture of any remaining speaking time.
- 9) Individuals who engage in egregious or repeated violations may be asked to leave the meeting.
- 10) The Mayor, or presiding officer, may remove any person from a meeting if the person is interrupting or disrupting the meeting. A person who willfully interrupts, disturbs, or disrupts an official meeting and who, upon being directed to leave the meeting by the presiding officer, willfully refuses to leave the meeting is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor (NCGS §143-318.17).

****Time limits do not apply to Quasi-Judicial Hearings, including Special Use permits.**

Amended on the 4th day of August 2026.

