



## **Town of Huntersville Board of Commissioners Public Comment and Public Hearing Policy**

### 1. Purpose.

The purpose of this Policy is to provide for public comments in a fair, consistent, and informative manner in accordance with the requirements of Sections 160A-81 and 160A-81.1 of the North Carolina General Statutes, which authorize the Board of Commissioners (the “Board”) to adopt rules governing the conduct of public hearings and public comment periods. The Town of Huntersville recognizes the importance of receiving comments from the public. The purpose of public hearings and public comment periods is to give the public an opportunity to express their views, comments, or opinions to the Board of Commissioners. It is a time for the Board of Commissioners to listen to the public. The following rules have been established to maintain order and decorum during public hearings and public comment periods. Furthermore, these rules are designed to ensure fairness to each speaker by establishing rules in advance that will be applied equally to each speaker.

### 2. Procedure.

- a) Persons desiring to address the Board during a public comment period or a public hearing shall list their full name, address, telephone number, and subject matter to be discussed on the speaker sign-up sheet as provided by the Town Clerk prior to the beginning of the meeting. Speakers wishing to yield their time to a designated spokesperson must also sign the speaker sign-up sheet and indicate the spokesperson to whom they are designating their time. Once the meeting has begun, a person may not sign up to speak.<sup>1</sup>
- b) For public comment periods and public hearings other than public zoning hearings, persons who have signed up to speak shall be allowed to speak for up to three (3) minutes. Designated spokespersons may speak for a maximum of nine (9) minutes. However, when a designated spokesperson is called upon to speak, any speakers yielding their time to the spokesperson must identify themselves and confirm the yield. The Mayor, or the Mayor Pro Tem in the absence of the Mayor, shall have the discretion to shorten the allotted speaking time depending on the number persons registered to speak and in consideration of the length of the agenda. Speakers shall not use or provide any technological presentations, including, but not limited to, videos or PowerPoint presentations.
- c) Public zoning hearings. At hearings involving amendments to the zoning ordinance or zoning map, the time allotted for speakers is set forth below:

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<sup>1</sup> When the Board elects to permit remote public participation, whether by telephonic or emailed comments, remote public speakers must contact the Town Clerk and provide the information required by this paragraph no later than 3:00 pm on the date of the scheduled Board meeting.

- i. The Petitioner, or their designated representative, shall be allowed 15 minutes to present. Any questions by the Board members shall not be counted against the time limit for the Petitioner. The Petitioner shall be allowed to use PowerPoint presentations, but shall not use any other technology, including videos, for his or her presentation.
  - ii. Any other person who has signed up to speak, whether as a proponent or opponent of the Petitioner, shall have 3 minutes each. Designated spokespersons may speak for a maximum of nine (9) minutes. However, when a designated spokesperson is called upon to speak, any speakers yielding their time to the spokesperson must identify themselves and confirm the yield. Speakers shall not use or provide any technological presentations, including, but not limited to, videos or PowerPoint presentations. Depending on the number of speakers signed up to speak regarding a petition, the Mayor, or the Mayor Pro Tem in the absence of the Mayor, shall have the discretion to shorten the allotted speaking time to 2 minutes per speaker.
  - iii. At the discretion of the Mayor, or the Mayor Pro Tem in the absence of the Mayor, the Petitioner shall be allowed up to 3 minutes for closing statements.
- d) In order to conduct public business in an efficient and productive manner, speakers are encouraged to avoid duplicative and repetitive comments.
  - e) The provisions of this Policy shall not apply to speakers addressing Board on awards and recognitions or for staff or other individuals expressly invited to address the Board on a matter.
  - f) For any matter, the time allotted to any speaker in this Policy may be extended by the Mayor, or the Mayor Pro Tem in the absence of the Mayor, in his or her sole discretion.
  - g) Speakers shall be civil and courteous in their language and presentation. Insults, personal attacks, accusations, profanity, vulgar language, inappropriate gestures, or other inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.
  - h) In order to provide for the maintenance of order and decorum in the conduct of the meeting, the Mayor may declare “out-of-order” any person who fails to comply with this policy. The Mayor, or the Mayor Pro Tem in the absence of the Mayor, shall caution any such person to abide by the provisions of this policy. Refusal to do so shall be grounds for removal of the speaker from the meeting.

Adopted this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

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John Aneralla, Mayor, Town of Huntersville

ATTEST:

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Janet Pierson, Clerk to the Board