

HALIFAX COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY

Pursuant to G.S. 153A-52.1, the Halifax County Board of Commissioners will provide a public comment period at least once per month as an item of business on the agenda of the board. In a month when there are two meetings of the board, the public comment period will be included as an item of business on the agenda of the first meeting of the month. There will be no public comment period during special meetings, emergency meetings or workshops, unless otherwise specified by the board.

The public comment period shall be subject to the following guidelines:

1. Each person desiring to speak during the public comment period must sign up prior to the start of the meeting on the sign-up sheet located on the podium in the Commissioners' Meeting Room, by listing his or her name, address and the topic on which he or she will speak. The sign-up sheet will be available thirty minutes prior to the scheduled meeting time, and removed from the podium by the clerk to the board five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled start of the meeting, after which no additional speakers will be added.

2. Any speaker who desires to distribute documents to the commissioners must have at least nine (9) copies to distribute. Documents will NOT be entered into the minutes of the meeting unless specifically approved by action of the board.

3. A total of fifteen (15) minutes will be set aside for public comment. At the end of this time, those who signed up to speak but could not be recognized during the allotted time will be invited to make their comments at the next public comment period, at which time they will be given priority for speaking without signing up again. Alternatively, the chair, in his or her discretion, or the board by motion duly adopted, may extend the time allotted for public comment.

4. Each speaker will have a maximum of three (3) minutes to speak. A speaker may not sign up to speak more than once during the same public comment period. No time may be yielded to a speaker by another speaker. To avoid repetitiveness, groups are encouraged to select a spokesperson to speak on their behalf. At the request of the chair, groups of persons supporting or opposing the same positions may be asked to designate a spokesperson to speak, and the designated spokesperson may be allotted up to five (5) minutes. Additional time may be allowed by the chair in his or her discretion, or by the board by motion duly adopted.

5. Speakers will be recognized in the order in which their names appear on the sign-up sheet. Speakers will address the commissioners from the lectern and begin their remarks by stating their name and address.

6. The purpose of the public comment period is to provide an opportunity to express concerns to the board. Speakers should not expect commissioners or county staff to answer impromptu questions. Speakers should not expect a dialogue with or response from commissioners, except to the extent necessary to clarify the speaker's position. The board will not take action on an item presented during public comment. When appropriate, the board may refer inquiries or items brought up during public comment to the county manager or other staff for follow-up.

7. Speakers' comments will be limited to subjects that are germane to Halifax County and within the jurisdiction or authority of the board of commissioners to act. Speakers will not discuss matters regarding the candidacy of any person seeking public office, including the candidacy of the person addressing the board.

8. Speakers should maintain proper decorum and make their comments in a civil manner. While helpful criticism is not discouraged, personal attacks and obscene, derogatory, or slanderous remarks cannot be tolerated.

9. A copy of this Public Comment Policy will be posted at the door of the Commissioners' Meeting Room.

Adopted October 2, 2018