

Town of Camden

Public Comment Policy

Purpose

The Town of Camden encourages open government and values public participation. In compliance with Delaware's Freedom of Information Act (29 Del. C. §10004), all meetings of the Town Council will include a period for meaningful public comment. The purpose of the public comment period is to allow members of the public to provide input to the Council on matters relating to town governance.

Placement on Agenda

The **Public Comment Period** shall appear on every regular meeting agenda prior to adjournment, unless another placement is necessary for orderly business. The Town may adjust the order of agenda items as needed.

Speaker Eligibility and Order

During the public comment period, speakers will be recognized in the following order:

1. **Town residents**
2. **Town business owners and representatives of local businesses**
3. **All other members of the public**

Within each group, speakers will be recognized in the order in which they sign up before the meeting begins.

Time Limits and Manner of Speaking

- Each speaker will be allotted **three (3) minutes** to address the Council.
- No speaker may transfer or yield time to another individual.
- Comments must be addressed to the **Chair** or **Mayor**, not to individual Council members or staff.
- Speakers shall state their **name** and **address (including town and zip code)** for the record.
- All remarks must relate to matters of **Town governance**.

- Speakers must conduct themselves courteously and refrain from personal attacks or disruptive behavior.
- The Council reserves the right, by majority vote, to close the public comment period after **forty (40) minutes**, if necessary for meeting efficiency. Remaining speakers will be invited to submit written comments or speak at the next meeting.

Council and Staff Response

The Council will generally not engage in dialogue during public comments. The Chair may provide brief factual information when appropriate. Town staff may follow up individually after the meeting if clarification or response is warranted.

Written Public Comments

Members of the public may submit written comments by mail, email, or in person to the Town Manager's office no later than **four (4) hours prior** to the start of the meeting.

- Written comments must include the author's full name and mailing address. Anonymous submissions will not be read.
- Written comments requesting to be read into the record will be read by staff, subject to the same **three-minute** limit.
- Other written correspondence may be summarized at the Chair's discretion.

Enforcement and Decorum

The Chair may rule a speaker out of order or remove individuals who are willfully and seriously disruptive, consistent with 29 Del. C. §10004(e)(2). All attendees must comply with established decorum to ensure an orderly and respectful meeting.

Virtual Participation

If remote access is provided, the meeting agenda and notice must include clear instructions for monitoring and participating. Remote speakers will be held to the same time and decorum rules as in-person speakers, pursuant to 29 Del. C. §10006A.

Legal Compliance

This policy complies with:

- **Delaware Freedom of Information Act**, 29 Del. C. §10004(a)(2), requiring public comment at open meetings and allowing reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions.
 - **2025 Delaware Attorney General’s FOIA Manual**, which affirms the requirement for a meaningful opportunity for public engagement.
 - Local procedural guidance consistent with examples from Delaware municipalities such as **Georgetown** and **Newark** (georgetowndel.com; newarkde.gov).
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