

## Public Participation Policy

The Town Council (the “Council”) recognizes that it both represents and is accountable to all citizens of the Town. It is the Council’s policy to make every effort to strengthen communications with citizens. Measures shall be instituted to increase citizen participation, encourage citizen input into governmental decision making and keep citizens informed of all actions contemplated or taken by the Council and the Town Meeting that will affect them. To this end the following steps shall be taken:

1. Members of the general public are welcome to address the Council at its meetings during the public participation session of the meeting. Those wishing to speak must sign in prior to the start of the meeting and can address the Council on any issue within the Council’s purview. The total amount of time allotted for public participation shall be fifteen (15) minutes. Immediately prior to the start of the meeting, the Town Administrator shall divide 15 minutes by those who have signed in for public participation. This shall designate the amount of time allotted each speaker. However, in no event shall any speaker be allowed to address the Council for more than a total of three (3) minutes. The total time allotted for public participation may be increased by a vote of the majority of the Council members present or in the discretion of the Chair. The Council will not engage in dialogue, but will give any remarks made appropriate consideration. Persons who choose to speak during the public participation segment must behave in a peaceable and orderly manner.
2. An individual citizen or group of citizens may request an appointment before the Council by contacting the Town Administrator’s Office, at least one week in advance of a scheduled meeting, stating the reason for the appearance and the action desired and naming a spokesperson for the group. If granted an opportunity to present by the Chair, participants shall be given the opportunity to make a reasonable presentation of information not yet available to the Council through a spokesperson and to express opinions and ask for pertinent information. Background data shall be prepared by the boards, committees, commissions, councils and departments “concerned” prior to the scheduled appointment with the Council insofar as possible. This is designed to ensure that all parties involved will have a reasonable understanding of the subject matter. Citizens are required to have written materials submitted for the Council’s meeting packet in accordance with established procedures.
3. To the degree possible, persons who will be directly affected by proposed Council discussion and/or action shall be notified by the Town Administrator’s Office of the date and time of meeting at which the matter will be discussed or acted upon by the Council.
4. All other citizen questions and complaints are to be referred initially to the Town Administrator’s Office, or the appropriate Town department otherwise responsible for action or recommendations.
5. The Council shall endeavor to use every means possible to keep the public informed via print media, cable TV and the Town website.