

Public Comment Guidelines

The Village of Bald Head Island Village Council is committed to allowing members of the public an opportunity to offer comments and suggestions. In addition to public hearings on specific matters before Village Council, a period is set aside for the purpose of receiving public comments and suggestions on any matters germane to the operation and management of the Village. All comments and suggestions addressed to the Council during the Public Comment Period shall be subject to the following procedures:

1. The Public Comment Period will typically be held at the beginning of each council meeting. Council may, however, rearrange agenda items, including the Public Comment Period, at its discretion. Rules 5 and 6 of the Council Rules of Procedure are hereby amended to the extent inconsistent with these Guidelines.
2. Speakers must abide by any Council-established rules governing the conduct of the public comment period, including but not limited to rules providing for
 - (a) speaker time limits,
 - (b) the designation of a spokesperson for groups supporting or opposing the same position,
 - (c) the selection of delegates from groups supporting or opposing the same position when the number of persons wishing to speak exceeds the capacity of the space available, and
 - (d) the maintenance of order and decorum.
3. All persons in attendance during a public comment period shall, unless given leave by the Mayor or meeting chair, adhere to the following guidelines for the maintenance of order and decorum in addition to any specific rules adopted by Council for a particular public comment period:
 - (a) Keep statements to a length of three (3) minutes, particularly when there are other persons waiting to speak;
 - (b) Do not interrupt other speakers when it is their turn to speak or engage in public discussion with other persons present in the hall during the public comment period;
 - (c) Remain courteous and respectful to other persons and/or viewpoints when making public comments, including through the language used, the tone adopted, and the manner of presentation; and
 - (d) Avoid making comments that are likely to be harmful, discriminatory, or embarrassing to other citizens, public officials, or Village employees.
4. The Mayor or meeting chair will acknowledge speakers in an orderly fashion. Speakers should not comment unless they have first been acknowledged by the Mayor or meeting chair.
5. After being acknowledged, speakers should address the Council from the lectern at the front of the room, or other Council-designated location, and begin their remarks by stating their name and address for the record.
6. Council and/or staff will not typically answer or respond to questions posed by speakers during the Public Comment Period. Speakers are encouraged to address comments to the entire Council and not one individual member. Discussions between speakers and members of the audience will not be permitted.
7. Speakers who have prepared written remarks or supporting documents are encouraged to leave a copy of such remarks and documents with the Clerk to the Council.
8. The following subjects are generally not appropriate for discussion during the public comment period:
 - Support or opposition for the candidacy of any person seeking public office, including the candidacy of a person addressing the Council;
 - Commercial solicitations or advertisements;
 - Matters that are not germane to the operation or management of the Village;
 - Matters which are the subject of a specific public hearing.