



Public Comments Policy

1. Pursuant to [§286.0114](#) Florida Statutes, members of the public are to be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter before the Council. The opportunity to be heard does not have to occur at the same meeting at which the Council takes official action, so long as an opportunity is provided at a meeting during the decision-making process and within a reasonable time before the meeting at which the Council takes official action. The requirements for providing a reasonable opportunity to be heard do not apply to:
 - a. An official act taken to deal with emergency situations affecting the public health, welfare or safety if compliance with requirements for providing public comment would cause an unreasonable delay in the ability of the Council to act;
 - b. An official act involving no more than a ministerial act, including, but not limited to, approvals of minutes and ceremonial proclamations; and
 - c. A meeting exempt from the provisions of §286.011, Florida Statutes.

2. The opportunity for public comment is subject to the following rules:
 - a. Individuals wishing to respond to specific agenda items will be provided the opportunity near the beginning of each Council meeting under the "Public Comments on Agenda Items" section of the agenda. Individual comments are limited to three (3) minutes. The Chair, however, may limit speaking time to two (2) minutes if there are a large number of speakers. For non-agenda items, individuals wishing to speak on such items will be provided the opportunity near the end of each Council meeting under the "Public Comments on non-Agenda Items" section of the agenda. Time frames will be the same as for Agenda Items.
 - b. The Council encourages groups to appoint one or two representatives to address the Council on behalf of the group, rather than all members of the group speaking at meetings in which a large number of individuals wish to be heard. In such cases, the Chair may provide additional time, beyond that set forth in section 2.a. above, for the comments of representatives.
 - c. Individuals wishing to speak on Agenda or non-Agenda items shall complete a "COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC" card and provide it to the Clerk of the Council or the General Counsel, prior to the start of the item. The "COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC" card may also be used to indicate an individual's support, opposition, or neutrality on a matter.
 - d. For an individual who has indicated an intent to speak, the individual is requested to come forward and state, for the record, his or her name and then to address the Council with the individual comments.
 - e. The Council has the right to maintain orderly conduct and proper decorum in a public meeting. Therefore, the Chair may curtail repetitious remarks and take such action as is necessary for orderly and efficient meetings. This may include ordering the removal of persons whose behavior is disruptive or disturbing the orderly and efficient conduct of the meeting or taking such other action as may be appropriate, and barring such persons from making any additional comments during the meeting unless permission to continue or again address the Council is granted by a majority vote of the Council members present.