

AFTER :

- You may need to wait to hear a decision.
- You may ask the clerk how you will be notified of the decision.

Congratulate yourself as you have just faced one of life's greatest fears and allowed your voice to matter!

ELEMENTS OF CIVIL DISCOURSE

- Know yourself
- Be respectful
- Pay attention
- Listen well
- Be curious
- Focus on issues
- Examine evidence
- Give evidence
- Be constructive
- Find Common Ground



MATTERS :

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
AT PUBLIC HEARINGS

WHY?

- You and/or your organization hold a unique perspective.
- You better inform policy makers and your community.
- You can attract attention to an issue or position.
- You may gain press coverage of the issue.
- You position yourself or your organization as advocates for the issue.



BEFORE THE HEARING:



Determine the purpose and tone of the public meeting.



Find out about the requirements for giving testimony.



Who else might be expected to participate on the issue, for or against? Many or few?



Take time to know the name of leader (Chair, President, etc.) and how to address council or board.

PREPARE A WRITTEN STATEMENT:

- Identify yourself – Name address, perhaps voting precinct.
- State your position... Give a one line preview at the beginning ... “I support or disagree with...”
- If possible, give the agenda number/name of the issue.
- Be brief.
- Be courteous.
- State your strongest supporting facts and give evidence.
- Personal stories resonate often better than facts and figures.
- Frame your position with how it will benefit the community and beyond.
 - What problem will it solve?
 - What benefit will it create?
- Address any false information.
- Restate your position/point.
- Thank them for considering your view.
- Send a copy by email and/or regular mail; make extra copies for oral testimony.

PRACTICE YOUR SPEECH:

1 minute = 150 words
(You may speak more quickly.)
Prepare several versions.
Short and shorter!

Do NOT be surprised by time limits.
More speakers may mean
a shorter time limit.
Usually 2 to 3 minutes,
up to 5 minutes if you represent
an organization

AT THE PUBLIC HEARING:

1. You will speak in the order in which you have signed up.
2. Strategize on your position for testifying – usually best to be one of the first.
3. You will be recorded. Adjust microphone. Identify yourself.
4. State your position and if possible give the agenda name/number of the issue.
5. Deliver your shortened, prepared speech.
6. If your points have already been made, simply agree with whomever came before and try to use a new twist to restate the position.
7. If you have maps or photos, be certain that these have been submitted ahead of your testimony.
8. Conclude by restating your position.
9. Thank the Council, Board or Commission for listening.

Public Testimony
is usually
one way –
Do NOT
expect a response.

AT THE HEARING IN AUDIENCE:



Listen to others carefully.



Be respectful and do not signal your feelings as others testify.



Record any relevant facts.



Look for the press – if possible connect afterward, to see if your position made an impact.



If many are testifying, the Council may call for a continuance or reduce speaking times. Show patience.