

**PINELLAS COUNTY COMMISSION
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND DECORUM RULES**

1. Balance of Rights and Decorum. Pinellas County is afforded the means to insure that the individual's right to participate in a public meeting is balanced with maintaining decorum during that meeting. The right of the individual to express his or her thoughts will generally prevail over restrictions on public participation.
2. Citizens To Be Heard Before the Commission. Each person who wishes to address the Commission under Citizens To Be Heard shall complete a citizen's comment card and submit the card to the Board Secretary. The remarks of each speaker are limited to three (3) minutes. Citizens may discuss any matter, unless the discussion is not appropriate because of a pending bid protest, the matter involves a quasi-judicial hearing or due process considerations, or there are other similar limitations relating to the discussion, as determined by the Chairman.
3. Public Input at Workshops. Time shall be allotted at the conclusion of each work session item for public comments. The remarks of each speaker shall be limited to no more than three (3) minutes, unless the Chairman extends the time.
4. Addressing the Commission.
 - A. When the person's name is called, the person shall approach the speaker's lectern and shall give the following information in an audible tone of voice for the minutes:
 1. name; whether they reside in a city, and if so, which city, or whether they reside in the unincorporated area;
 2. if requested by the Chairman, the person may be required to state whether the person speaks for a group of persons or a third party, if the person represents an organization, whether the view expressed by the person represents an established policy or position approved by the organization and whether the person is being compensated by the organization.
 - B. All persons shall provide a place of residence or business address in writing prior to speaking.
 - C. All remarks shall be addressed to the Commission as a body and not to any member thereof.
 - D. No person, other than a member of the Commission, and the person having the floor, may be permitted to enter into any discussion, either directly or through a member of the Commission, without permission of the Chairman. No question may be asked except through the Chairman.
 - E. Speakers should make their comments concise and to the point, and present any data or evidence they wish the Commission to consider.

5. Signs, Placards, Banners. For public safety purposes, no signs or placards mounted on sticks, posts, poles or similar structures shall be allowed in County Commission meeting rooms. Other signs, placards, banners, shall not disrupt meetings or interfere with others' visual rights.
6. Decorum.
 - A. Please be respectful of others' opinions, and refrain from making personal attacks. Any person who becomes disorderly or who fails to confine remarks to the identified subject or business at hand shall be cautioned by the Chairman and given the opportunity to conclude remarks on the subject in a decorous manner and within the designated time limit. Any person failing to comply as cautioned may be barred from making any additional comments during the meeting by the Chairman, unless permission to continue or again address the Commission is granted by the majority of the Commission members present.
 - B. If the Chairman or the Commission declares an individual out of order, he or she may be requested to relinquish the podium. If the person does not do so, he or she may be subject to removal from the Commission Chambers or other meeting room.
 - C. Clapping, applauding, heckling or verbal outbursts in support or opposition to a speaker or his or her remarks shall be discouraged. Persons exiting the Commission Chamber shall do so quietly.

PUBLIC HEARING PROCEDURES

Public Hearings before the Board of County Commissioners are governed by the provisions of Section 134-14 of the Pinellas County Land Development Code. That code provides that at the conclusion of each person's presentation, any speaker may seek the Chair's permission to ask questions of staff. Specifically:

1. At the conclusion of the presentations by the applicant and any proponents, all affected parties may seek the Chair's permission to ask questions of or seek clarification from the applicant and/or the proponents.
2. At the conclusion of the presentation by the opponents, all affected parties may seek the Chair's permission to ask questions of or seek clarification from any opponent.

The applicant's closing comments will address testimony subsequent to their presentation. Continuing rebuttal of other than directly preceding testimony will not be allowed.

Because much testimony has already been submitted in writing, the following guidelines are expected to be sufficient to accommodate efficient presentations:

1. The applicant should present his or her entire case, including rebuttal, in twenty (20) minutes.
2. Persons who have been authorized to represent an organization with five (5) or more members or a group of five (5) or more persons should, to the maximum extent possible, limit their presentation to ten (10) minutes. It is expected that others in the organization or group will waive their time.
3. All other persons may speak up to a total of three (3) minutes each, after completing blue “Citizens To Be Heard” cards and submitting them to the Agenda Coordinator at the Staff Table in the front of the Board Room. The Chair will call each speaker’s name.