

BOARD POLICY – 2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT AT BOARD MEETINGS

Individuals attending Board meetings must conduct themselves with respect and civility toward others. Any person in attendance who conducts himself or herself in a boisterous or inappropriate manner with disregard to the rules of the Board, may be asked to leave at any time or ask that law enforcement escort disorderly person from the meeting in accordance with ORC 505.09 and could be barred from further participation and/or attendance at any or all future Board meetings.

Public participation in a business meeting of the Board is a privilege, not a right. The community is not entitled to speak during a board meeting because it is just that, a meeting of and for the business of the Board, not a community forum.

However, the Board understands that including a public comment period may be the best means to receive input from the public in an open and professional manner.

Section 2.1 Speaker Registration

Any person intending to speak during the Public Comment portion of the Board meeting must legibly print ALL requested information as included on the “Public Comment Speaker Request” card, submitting it to the Board Chairperson or other Chairperson presiding over the Board meeting, no later than five (5) minutes BEFORE the meeting is slated to begin.

Speaker Request forms will be available with the publicly available agendas at the Board meeting.

Submittal of the Public Comment Speaker Request card is the only method a person may use to be called on to speak during a Board meeting.

A Speaker may only speak on one specific topic per meeting.

Any Speaker Request card attempted to be submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.

Any person purposely attempting to deceive the Board, submitting a Speaker Request card containing misinformation or purposely omitting information, may result in the Speaker forfeiting their right to speak.

Persons having questions regarding the practices, plans, or policies of the Seneca Parks should address those questions to Park staff during regular business hours. Employee grievances and grievances against employees or Board members are not proper subjects for public comment at Board meetings and will also not be heard by the Board at that time.

Section 2.2 Speaker Identification

Each Speaker shall be called by the Board Chairperson to stand where they are, unless otherwise directed. Each Speaker shall identify oneself by legal name, provide current home address for the record, state the subject he/she wishes to discuss, and may state whom he/she is representing.

Section 2.3 Speaker Time Limits

Each Speaker will be limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes once called upon by the Chairperson and are permitted to speak only once at each meeting.

No more than five (5) Speakers may register and will be limited to no more than 18 minutes total time for the Public Comment section of the Board agenda including, but not limited to: time for Board Chairperson to call up each Speaker, each Speaker comments, and Board Chairperson closing of public comment.

The Board reserves the right to end the total period for public comments at any time and may also, with majority vote, extend the public comment period should the need arise.

Section 2.4 Comment Contents

All remarks shall be addressed to the Board as a whole and not to any member thereof or to the audience.

Discussion between Speakers and attendees of the Board meeting is prohibited. Likewise, the Board will not engage in conversation with the audience at any time or attempt to answer questions from the audience while the Board is in session.

The Board Chairperson has the right to interrupt, and Board members have the right to request the Board Chairperson to interrupt, and ask a citizen to be seated if comments are unrelated to Board business or become repetitive or disruptive.

The Board Chairperson is **not** obligated to respond to or request other Board members or Seneca Parks Staff to respond to comments from the public at that time. Issues requiring possible action by the Board may be added to future meeting agendas. Any issues that can be addressed by staff will be noted for attention later, during regular business hours.

Each Speaker shall **not** include or engage in obscenities, defamation, or slander, and shall not violate the Ohio Revised Code provisions concerning Disorderly Conduct or Disturbing a Public Meeting. If the Speaker chooses to engage in any of these verbal or physical actions, the Speaker will forfeit any balance of time remaining for public comment, and be asked to leave or ask that law enforcement escort disorderly person from the meeting in accordance with ORC 505.09. Person may be barred from further participation and/or attendance at future Board meetings.