

THE PHILADELPHIA PARKING AUTHORITY

Policy on Public Participation at Public Meetings

Purpose

The Authority recognizes the value of public input related to its operations generally, and particularly as to decisions under consideration at public meetings. This policy has been created to achieve the dual goals of fostering public comment at public meetings and permitting the efficient and orderly completion of Authority business. The policy is consistent with the Sunshine Act (65 Pa. C.S. §§701-706) and will be implemented and interpreted in a manner consistent with law.

Procedure

The presiding officer of the Authority's Board, or the relevant committee, will make decisions related to public comment issues in consideration of this policy, the Sunshine Act and such other standards that are reasonably necessary to achieve the goals of this policy. If the presiding officer's decision is disputed, it may be overruled by a majority of those Board members present and voting.

Those interested in submitting comments during a public meeting may do so under the following rules and guidelines:

1. Public participation shall be permitted only during the public comment portion of the agenda, which will generally be at the beginning of each public meeting.
2. To avoid undue delay in the progress of the meeting and needless repetition of the same points, the total time allotted for public comment will ordinarily not be more than thirty (30) minutes with a the maximum period for participation per person of 3 minutes. Public comment may be for items related to Authority issues on or off the agenda.
3. Participants should try to organize their comments in order to meet the time limitations of paragraph (2).
4. Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface their comments by an announcement of their name, address, and topic they wish to address. Participants are advised that their comments, and personal information submitted along with those comments, may be included in the minutes of the public meeting and that those minutes constitute a public record.
5. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members or Authority staff individually.
6. In cases of groups of two (2) or more persons, the presiding officer has the right to ask that only 1 representative act as spokesperson for the group.
7. The presiding officer may respond to a question or comment, or permit other Board members or Authority staff to do so when such response will serve to resolve the item during the public

participation period. (The Sunshine Act provides a limited right to comment at public meetings, but not demand answers to questions.)

8. Issues of a privileged or confidential nature will not be addressed by the Authority at public meetings. Among those issues are: Human Resources matters, pending litigation and quasi-judicial deliberations.
9. Public participants must be 18 years of age or older.
10. The presiding officer may:
 - a. Interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant.
 - b. Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum.
 - c. Request the assistance of security officers to remove a disorderly person when that person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.
 - d. Call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.

Recording devices

Non-intrusive electronic recording devices (including cameras), will be permitted at public meetings. The Authority may require the pooling of recordings in the event the number of recording devices is too great to permit the orderly operation of the public meeting. The public meeting will not be delayed, nor will the configuration of the meeting room be altered in any manner in order to assist with the recording of the public meeting.

Prohibition

1. Weapons of any kind are prohibited from Authority meetings. This prohibition will apply to firearms legally carried and concealed pursuant to law. Guests are subject to metal detector or other searches deemed necessary by Authority security to insure compliance with this prohibition. Persons determined to be in possession of a weapon will be required to leave the Authority's property immediately.
2. Upon entering the public meeting room:
 - a) Mobile phones should be turned off or set on a silent mode.
 - b) No placards or banners will be permitted within the meeting room.