

PURPOSE:

To establish a policy of the Historical Commission (Commission) with regard to those persons wishing to speak at meetings of the Commission.

POLICY:

The Commission welcomes information, concerns, and opinions from those attending Commission meetings that are related to matters within the Commission's jurisdiction. The Commission hereby adopts this policy: to provide members of the public a fair opportunity to speak; to ensure compliance with the *Open Meeting Law* and other legal obligations; and to facilitate the orderly conduct of the Commission's meetings.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all persons wishing to speak at a Commission meeting. The Commission, at the chair's discretion, may provide the following opportunities to speak during the meeting: (i) at a "Citizen Speak" period generally scheduled at the beginning of a meeting; and (ii) at designated periods for comment on topics identified on the Commission's agenda. The Commission welcomes comments expressing any viewpoint related to the topics of any particular comment period.

PROCEDURES:

- a. The Commission will typically schedule time for a "Citizen Speak" comment period at or near the beginning of its meetings. "Citizen Speak" is a limited forum to comment on topics within the Commission's jurisdiction and not otherwise listed on the Commission's agenda. To ensure compliance with the *Open Meeting Law*, privacy laws, and other legal obligations, Commission members will rarely engage with a speaker or with each other during "Citizen Speak" periods.
- b. The Commission may also provide time for public comment on topics identified on the Commission's agenda. Comments during such periods are limited to those related to the specific topic under deliberation.
- c. Persons wishing to provide comments to the Commission shall verbally identify themselves by name and address prior to commenting.
- d. All comments shall be addressed to or through the chair or acting chair of the Commission.

- e. Each comment period shall not exceed 15 minutes and each speaker shall not exceed three minutes, unless otherwise determined by the chair.
- f. Members of the public are encouraged to keep their comments respectful, despite any differences of opinion on the matters discussed. Threats of violence or comments inciting imminent lawlessness are not allowed. Members of the public shall not disrupt a meeting by interrupting individuals who have been authorized by the chair to speak.

The chair shall provide at least one verbal warning to a speaker if they make a disruptive comment or engage in disruptive conduct. If, after at least one verbal warning, the speaker persists in making disruptive comments or engaging in disruptive conduct, the chair may end that person's privilege of address for that meeting.

DEFINITION:

In-person Meeting: A meeting of a public body that is open and physically accessible to the public, with all participants physically present together in the same place, not on internet, conference call, or video conference.

Hybrid Meeting: A meeting conducted with a subset of the participants attending the meeting in person, while other participants are provided an adequate alternative means of joining the meeting, without limitation, providing public access through telephone, internet, or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or any other technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the public body in real time.

Remote Meeting: A meeting conducted with all members of the public body and public participants attending remotely through telephone, internet, or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or any other technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the public body in real time.

REGULATORY / STATUTORY REFERENCES

Massachusetts G.L. c.30A, §20.

Administrative
Policy and
Procedure

Historical Commission
Public Comment Policy

Approved – 5/13/2024

APPROVED BY:

Historical Commission, Chair: Michael Racette _____

Historical Commission, Vice Chair: Alexander Gavis _____

Historical Commission: Grant Brown _____

Historical Commission: Michael Greco _____

Historical Commission: Jacob Lilley _____

Historical Commission: Lawrence McNally _____

Historical Commission: Rise Shepsle _____

Historical Commission, Alternate: Odessa Sanchez _____

Historical Commission, Alternate: Joyce Wadlington _____

Historical Commission, Alternate: Jackie Hempel _____

Historical Commission, Alternate: Emily Maitin _____

Historical Commission, Alternate: Thomas Paine _____

Historical Commission, Alternate: Elizabeth Cahill _____

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