EAST FALLOWFIELD TOWNSHIP
CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
RESOLUTION NO. 2025-15

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF EAST FALLOWFIELD ADOPTING RULES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETINGS

WHEREAS, Section 710.1 of the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act (65 Pa.C.S.A. § 710.1) mandates that municipal governments provide residents or taxpayers with "a reasonable opportunity . . . to comment on matters of concern, official action or deliberation which are or may be before the board or council prior to taking official action;" and,

WHEREAS, Section 710 of the Sunshine Act (65 Pa.C.S.A. § 710) establishes that municipal governments may regulate public comment and the orderly administration of public meetings, affirming that "nothing in this chapter shall prohibit the agency from adopting by official action the rules and regulations necessary for the conduct of its meetings and the maintenance of order (65 Pa.C.S.A. § 710)"; and,

WHEREAS, comments from residents and stakeholders can provide important information and feedback to the Board of Supervisors that facilitates improved decision-making by members of the Board of Supervisors, and

WHEREAS, The purpose of the policy is to assure an orderly framework within which the business of the Township can be conducted by setting basic ground rules for public participation, encouraging the Board of Supervisors and the public to act toward each other with mutual respect and provide a framework for enforcing the rules; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that East Fallowfield Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, establishes the following Rules of Conduct for the Board of Supervisors governing public comment at meetings of the Board of Supervisors:

1) Time will be reserved for public comment:

a) The first public comment period shall be permitted at the conclusion of the Board's discussion on agenda items designated as action items after a motion has been made and seconded. Such comments shall be restricted to the motion under consideration.

b) The second public comment period shall be held during the public participation period on the agenda and shall be for any matters of general concern before the Board of Supervisors.

c) During work session meetings, public comments will be taken at the end of the meeting on agenda and general business items.

2) The following individuals will have standing to offer comments:

a) Any resident or taxpayer of the East Fallowfield Township

b) Any person owning real estate in the Township of East Fallowfield or their representative.

c) Any authorized representative of an organization or entity whose primary place of business is in the Township of East Fallowfield.

3) A copy of this Resolution shall be on display or made available within the meeting room. Prior to making their comment, all speakers shall state their name, address, and their affiliation if they are speaking other than as a resident.

4) Public comment periods shall be administered by the Board Chair under the following rules:

a) Prior to the first public comment period, Board Chair shall read the following instructions:

i. "We ask that all those speaking limit their comments to 3 minutes. Please stay on topic, present your comments in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration, and be respectful of the institution of Township Government in your words, tone and gestures. Please comply with any instructions I might give you during your statement. Thank you."

b) Overall total public comment time in any comment period shall not be restricted except by vote of the Board of Supervisors.

c) At Board of Supervisors meetings, the Board of Supervisors Chairperson shall be the spokesperson for the Board, maintain decorum at the meetings, uniformly enforce the rules expressed in this Resolution, and will generally refer citizen concerns to the township manager for research by staff and reporting back to the Board of Supervisors.

d) Each speaker requesting time will be recognized only once during any comment period. Individuals may not give their time to other people.

e) A timer will be visible to speakers to indicate the amount of time that has elapsed during their comment. An auditory signal will inform speakers when 3 minutes have expired since they began their comment. The timer will continue to run until the speaker has completed their comment.

f) The Board of Supervisors Chair will recognize individuals to speak and determine the order of speaking.

g) If able, speakers must go up to the podium to address the Board of Supervisors. Unless it is necessary to provide a reasonable accommodation, comment will not be allowed from the audience sitting area.

h) Individuals must state their name and address for the record prior to making a public comment. Note that board meeting minutes will not include the name of the speaker unless the speaker clearly identifies themself.

i) The public comment period is not an appropriate time for a question-and-answer session. The Board is not required to answer questions posed during public comment. However, when applicable and appropriate, answers to questions raised during the public comment period will be provided at a later meeting or where appropriate through follow-up with the individual speaker.

j) Speakers should address the Board Chair directly and not directly question or engage dialogue with the Board of Supervisors members, township staff members or other individuals presenting at the meeting unless expressly permitted by the Board Chair. The issues handled by the Township's staff or professionals are often complex, and in order to make sure the information being disseminated to the public is accurate, responses to questions posed during a public meeting, will be provided by staff at a later date, during a public meeting or individually to the speaker at the direction of the Board Chair.

k) Any action or ruling taken by the Board Chair in managing public comment periods may be overruled by a majority vote of the Board.

l) Nothing herein shall be construed as a limitation on: presentations on matters of Township concern placed on the agenda by the Township; or comments by members of Township Board, staff or consultants, speaking in their official capacities; or any other action by the Township or Board as permitted by the Sunshine Act.

5) Any references to the Board Chair herein shall be construed to include the Board Chair, Vice-Chair, or his/her designee.

6) If a resident needs a reasonable accommodation to attend a meeting, they should contact the Township Manager no later than three days in advance so that the Township can make the accommodation for them to attend the meeting.

7) If in the judgement of the Board of Supervisors, the period for public comment is unusually long, the atmosphere has become unruly, or comments become repetitive, the Board of Supervisors may move to close public comment or defer all or portions of the public comment to a subsequent regular meeting or to a work session or to an advertised special meeting.

ADOPTED this 22nd day of July 2025, by the Board of Supervisors of East Fallowfield Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
EAST FALLOWFIELD TOWNSHIP

Clare Small-McEvoy, Chair

Mike Dombroski, Vice Chair

Wilson T. Lambert, Jr., Member

Katja DiRado, Member

Al Wright, Member

Attest:

Township Manager/Secretary