



PROCEDURES FOR DRBC PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Commissioners and staff appreciate the public's participation and thank individuals in advance for cooperating with the procedures set forth below. These procedures are intended to help sustain the flow of Commission public hearings, to allow as many people as possible to be heard, and to ensure that an accurate record of all comments is obtained. The Hearing Officer may modify these rules as necessary to ensure that the hearing objectives are met and to ensure public safety and security.

1. **Speaker Registration.** Each individual who wishes to testify at a public hearing should "register" in either of the following ways:
 - (Preferred) Online at a web site set up in advance for each public hearing. The web site address for registration will be included in the public notice for the public hearing. Online registration must occur prior to the scheduled public hearing (in most cases, no later than 12 PM on the day of the scheduled public hearing). This method is preferred and encouraged since it allows the Hearing Officer to plan and implement hearing schedules and procedures.
 - By completing and submitting a comment card at the hearing clearly indicating the speaker's name, affiliation, and the matter(s) on which he/she wishes to comment. Registration will remain open throughout the public hearing, but please note that those that pre-register (in most instances) will have priority.
2. **Speaker Sequence.** Commenters who have registered in advance will generally be called first. Speakers for each agenda item will be called separately. The Hearing Officer may invite elected government officials to speak before others in order to afford everyone an opportunity to hear them and to expedite their return to their official duties. People in the audience who have not yet registered may be offered the opportunity to comment as time allows, at the discretion of the Hearing Officer.
3. **Time Limits for Speakers.** The Hearing Officer will establish time limits. Commenters are advised to expect a limit of about three minutes. Time limits may be reduced or increased, based upon subject matter, number of speakers, available time, and the Hearing Officer's discretion. When a commenter's time has expired, the commenter must stop speaking and return to his/her seat. Commenters may not cede any portion of their time to another commenter.
4. **Questions and Dialogue.** As a general rule, the Commissioners and staff will not respond to comments during the public hearing. At the request of a speaker, the Hearing Officer may ask a staff member to clarify an ambiguity or confirm facts pertaining to a hearing item. Speakers should be aware that the

Hearing Officer or staff may ask one or more questions of the speaker to assist with the record, and the Hearing Officer or staff may comment after a speaker finishes to clarify certain issues for the benefit of the audience. The Commission sometimes holds an “Information Session” on complex matters preceding a public hearing. Such sessions typically include a Q&A component where staff responds to questions. Open Public Comment Sessions will not be offered at public hearings.

5. **No Comment by Audio/Video.** Public comment will not be accepted via phone, video, or audio recording. Individuals or their representatives who wish to speak must do so in person.
6. **Recordkeeping.** Public hearings are recorded digitally or on tape, and the recording is preserved as a public record. Recordings may include video. Public hearings are sometimes recorded and transcribed by a court reporter. Commenters are asked to begin by clearly stating their name and affiliation, as applicable. Speakers should recognize that their comments can and will be made publicly available in accordance with the DRBC’s rules, regulations, and policies. Hearings or portions of hearings may also be made available over the Internet should the Commission decide to broadcast them.
7. **Speaker Conduct, Audience Conduct, Safety and Security.** Public hearing attendees should understand and respect the fact that the safety and security of all participants is a primary objective of the DRBC. All attendees must adhere to the following basic rules of conduct, safety, and security:
 - a. Hearing attendees should always find, locate, and note the emergency exits in the venue and follow all instructions to vacate should there be an emergency that requires evacuation.
 - b. The audience should remain quiet while others are speaking so the court reporter and recording devices can produce an accurate record. Interrupting another’s testimony with loud objections, demonstrations, or other disruptions is prohibited.
 - c. The Hearing Officer and/or trained security officers may remove attendees for conduct, behavior, or language that is disruptive or threatening.
 - d. Audience members may be subject to search and metal scanning by trained security officers. Weapons or items that can be used as weapons are not permitted in the hearing room.
 - e. Speakers should state their name and affiliation and direct all comments to the Commissioners or the Hearing Officer. Speakers should refrain from directly engaging and debating with one another. It is likely and should be expected that individuals with differing opinions or points of view will disagree; however, all speakers who provide comments in a respectful manner should be respected by the audience.
 - f. The Hearing Officer may suspend the hearing either temporarily or indefinitely until such time as the safety and security of attendees can be achieved. If, in the opinion of the Hearing Officer, the safety and security of attendees cannot be achieved, the hearing may be: (1) suspended and replaced with written comments only or (2) suspended and later resumed at a remote location using available technology. It is noted that such technology is not available to the Commission at this time.

8. **Signs, Placards, Banners & Other Display Media.** Except as provided below, no signs, placards, banners, props, or other visual displays will be permitted in the public hearing/meeting room or in the registration area. Signs, banners, and other media are permitted in other public areas outside the meeting and registration area; however, if the facility or venue where the public hearing/meeting is being conducted has additional restrictions on the use or location of such media, the public will be informed and must comply with the facility's requirements.

Exception: The use of visual exhibits (such as maps, plans, tables, or charts) to support an individual's public testimony may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. Anyone wishing to display such items during their spoken comment must submit copies for review and must obtain the Commission's prior approval, which can be requested at the time of pre-registration (preferred) or on-site registration. Visual exhibits for support of an individual's public testimony must be no greater in size than 30" x 42", must be handheld, and may not be attached to or projected on walls or mounted on poles, staffs, or other forms of support.

9. **Written Comments.** Unless otherwise advertised or communicated by the Hearing Officer, the period for written comments will close at 5 PM three business days following the adjournment of the public hearing. **Public comment will not be accepted at the business meeting, which will be held at a separate date and time, when the Commissioners may consider and act on any item for which the public hearing and comment period have closed, or for which no hearing is required.** It is strongly encouraged that all written comments should be submitted in common electronic formats (pdf preferred) rather than on paper. Written comments may be hand delivered to designated DRBC staff or collection area(s) during public hearings. Speakers should not approach the Hearing Officer or the Commissioners to deliver comments or supporting materials.
10. **Video and Audio Recording.** Handheld or stand-based video and audio equipment is generally permitted in the hearing room as long as its use does not interfere with other people's ability to see and hear, and does not otherwise disrupt the proceedings. Those wishing to record the hearing should recognize that: (1) the Hearing Officer can end the activity if it is disrupting the hearing; and (2) there will be restrictions on where equipment can be located. Generally, such equipment may not be placed in the area directly in front of the Commissioners, Hearing Officer, DRBC staff participants, DRBC recording equipment, court reporter, or the podium from which testimony is offered.
11. **News Media.** Members of the news media must check in at the registration desk. If news media wish to use video and audio equipment, they should mention this at check-in so they can be directed to a designated area if one has been established. All news media wishing to interview Commissioners or staff must make the request through on-site DRBC Communications Office representatives. All interviews conducted during the business meeting must take place outside of the meeting room.
12. **Hearing Room Access.** All rules and access restrictions established by the host venue will be adhered to, including occupancy limits, emergency and handicapped access, and parking regulations (such as fire lanes and no parking zones). Every person in the hearing room must have a seat or stand in an area designated by DRBC staff. While attendees may come and go as they please (as long as the movement does not disrupt the hearing proceedings), standing in aisles or sharing seats is not allowed.

13. **Green Meetings.** Participants are encouraged to support “Green Meeting” initiatives as follows:
- a. Written comments should be submitted electronically rather than on paper.
 - b. Hearing agendas and other related materials will be available to the public electronically and should be brought to the hearing on electronic devices rather than in a paper format if possible. DRBC will provide very limited paper copies of materials at hearings.

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