



## PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS, PUBLIC MEETINGS, AND “PUBLIC DIALOGUE”

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 hearings and public meetings, 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 or chair may modify these rules as necessary to ensure the smooth flow of the hearing or meeting.

1. **Registration.** Each individual who wishes to speak at a public hearing must “register” by completing and submitting to the Commission Secretary or her assistant a comment card clearly indicating his or her name and affiliation and the matter(s) on which he/she wishes to be heard. Registration will remain open throughout the public hearing. Registration is requested, but not required, for the Public Dialogue portion of the agenda.
2. **Speaker Sequence.** Commenters who have registered in advance of the start of the hearing or meeting (either by contacting the Commission beforehand if that option has been advertised, or registering at the hearing or meeting location) will be called first. For matters on which a large number of speakers are expected, comment cards may be numbered and individuals called in the corresponding sequence. An exception to this policy is that the Chair may invite public officials to speak before others in order to afford everyone an opportunity to hear them and to expedite their return to their official duties.
3. **Time Constraints.** The hearing officer or Chair will establish time limitations for speakers based upon the number of individuals who wish to be heard and the time available. Commenters are advised to expect a limit of two or three minutes. When a commenter’s time has expired, the commenter must stop speaking, and if a microphone is in use, leave the microphone area. Commenters may not cede any portion of their time to another commenter.
4. **Questions.** At the request of a commenter, the hearing officer or Chair may ask a staff member to clarify an ambiguity or confirm facts pertaining to a hearing item. As a general rule, the Commissioners and staff will not otherwise respond to comments during the public hearing. The Commission sometimes holds an “Information Session” on a complex matter that afterward is subject to a public hearing. Such sessions typically include a Q&A component, during which staff responds to questions.
5. **No Comment by Audio/Video.** Public comment will not be accepted via phone, cell phone, video or audio recording. Persons who wish to speak (or their representatives) must do so in person.

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6. **Record.** Public hearings are sometimes recorded by a court reporter. Whether or not this is the case, commenters are asked to begin by clearly stating their name and affiliation or place of residence. Public hearings and business meetings (which are always held in public) are recorded digitally or on tape and the recording is preserved as a public record. Comments offered during Public Dialogue serve to inform the Commission, but unlike oral comments made at a public *hearing*, they are not part of a decision-making record of the Commission.
7. **Speaker and Audience Conduct.** Please remain quiet while others are giving testimony so that the court reporter can produce an accurate record. Interrupting another's testimony with loud objections, demonstrations or other disruptions is prohibited. Heckling the hearing officer or anyone in attendance is likewise prohibited, as are abusive language and threatening behavior. Any violation of this policy will be cause for dismissal, and if necessary, removal, from the meeting hall.
8. **Signs, Placards, Banners & Other Display Media.** Signs, placards, banners and other display media are permitted in the meeting room as long as they do not interfere with other people's ability to see and hear and do not otherwise disrupt the proceedings. Such items must be hand-held and may not be attached to or projected on walls or mounted on poles, staffs, or other forms of support. Additional host venue requirements and restrictions will be strictly enforced.
9. **Written Comments.** Written comments may be submitted by hand during public hearings and meetings.
10. **Video and Audio Recording:** Handheld video and audio equipment is generally permitted in the meeting 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.
11. **News Media.** Members of the news media who wish to use video and audio equipment must check in at the registration desk so they can be directed to a designated press area if one has been established. Members of the press wishing to interview DRBC Commissioners or staff must make the request through the Communications Office. All interviews performed or recorded during the meeting should take place outside of the meeting room.
12. **Meeting Room Access:** All rules, regulations, 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. All individuals in the meeting room must have a seat or be in an area designated by DRBC staff. While attendees may come and go as they please without being disruptive, standing in aisles, sharing seats, etc. is not allowed.
13. **Additional Procedures for Public Dialogue.** The Commission Chair may terminate the Public Dialogue session if any speaker fails to respect the established time limit or otherwise violates the ground rules set forth above.