

**RICHLAND TOWNSHIP
BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

RESOLUTION #2026-18

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF RICHLAND TOWNSHIP ADOPTING RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT AT TOWNSHIP MEETINGS AND FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DURING LEGISLATIVE AND QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARINGS

WHEREAS, Richland Township is a Township of the Second Class, located in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and is governed by an elected Board of Supervisors; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Richland Township is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations for public comment at Township meetings, and for legislative and quasi-judicial public hearings to be conducted by the Board; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Richland Township is authorized to establish a level of civility and promote an atmosphere of reasoned expression of ideas in promulgating rules and regulations for its public hearings; and

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes that public participation in the public meeting and hearing process is intended to afford citizens an opportunity to comment on the important matters being considered by the Richland Township Board of Supervisors; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of Richland Township establishes the following rules and regulations regarding legislative public hearings and conduct:

A. PUBLIC COMMENT DURING TOWNSHIP MEETINGS

1. Purpose

The Township Supervisors recognize that public meetings and hearings conducted in accordance with Pennsylvania's Second-Class Township Code (53 P.S. § 65101, et seq.), the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act (65 Pa. C.S. § 701, et seq.), and the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (53 P.S. § 10101 et seq.) require certain rules and regulations in order to ensure orderly transaction of public business, while allowing for sufficient time for input from Township residents and/or taxpayers. Quasi-judicial public hearings, such as Zoning Hearing Board or Conditional Use hearings, shall be conducted according to these rules and regulations unless superseded by the laws applicable in those instances.

2. Delegation of Responsibility

The Presiding Officer at each public meeting shall be the Chairman or Vice-Chairman and shall be conducted in accordance with the rules and regulations contained herein.

3. Procedures

It shall be the policy of the Township that regular participants in public comment shall only be residents and/or taxpayers of the Township or their counsel or authorized representatives. At the discretion of the Presiding Officer, others may be permitted to speak at public meetings and may include anyone having registered a legitimate interest with the Township Secretary in any contemplated action or recommendation.

4. Participation

- a) There will be provided at the beginning of each public meeting an opportunity for residents and/or taxpayers of the Township or their counsel or authorized representatives to comment one time on any agenda item. At the end of the public meeting, there shall be an opportunity for participants to make one public comment on other matters relevant to Township business. Such times on the agenda shall be titled "Public Comment – Agenda Items Only", and "Public Comment – Non-Agenda Items".
- b) Comments must be relevant to township business or agenda items. Profane, irrelevant, or disruptive comments from the floor or podium are deemed out of order.
- c) All individuals wishing to provide public comment must first be recognized by the Presiding Officer before speaking.
- d) To make a comment, participants should go to the podium at the front of the room (or other designated location), sign the public comment sheet, state their name, municipality of residence, indicate if they are a resident and/or taxpayer, and if relevant, mention the group association they represent.
- e) Individuals who are unable to stand due to disability or other physical limitations may provide their comment from a seated position or other accessible location designated by the Presiding Officer.
- f) If a speaker is not comfortable stating their address aloud, they shall instead provide their address in writing on the public comment sheet for inclusion in the official record maintained by the recording secretary.
- g) No participant may speak more than once on the same topic unless all others who wish to speak on that topic have already been heard, and special permission is granted by the Presiding Officer for a participant to speak again.
- h) All statements by participants shall be directed to the Presiding Officer, and no such participant shall address or question individual Township board or commission members, other participants or meeting attendees.
- i) Unless otherwise permitted by the Presiding Officer, participants shall be limited to speak for a maximum of three (3) minutes. Participants are not permitted to yield their time to others.
- j) All persons wishing to be placed on the agenda for participation in a Township Supervisors' meeting shall register their intent in writing with the Township Secretary at least seven days in advance of the meeting, and such registration shall include their name and address, indicate if they are a resident and/or taxpayers, and if relevant, mention the group association they represent and the topic to be addressed.

5. Authority

The Presiding Officer of the public meeting shall have the authority during public meetings to engage in the following:

- a) To limit the time for each public participant to speak, if such is in the interest in allowing full public participation, in the interest of maintaining order or in the interest of moving a particular issue to a vote.
- b) To interrupt or terminate a participant's statement, when the statement is too lengthy, directed at a particular person, abusive, obscene, repetitive or irrelevant.
- c) To request that any individual leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum and to request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.
- d) To call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting so as to warrant such action.
- e) To vary the placement of speakers throughout the meeting at the Presiding Officer's discretion.
- f) Public meetings will conclude at 10:00 p.m., unless a majority of the Board members vote to extend the time.
- g) In the event that there is not enough time available for non-agenda public comment at the end meeting, the Presiding Officer may defer public comment to the next regular meeting or to a special meeting occurring in advance of the next regular meeting.

6. Placards, Signs and Banners Prohibited

In order to maintain public safety, preserve clear sightlines, prevent disruptions to meeting proceedings, ensure compliance with fire code and occupancy requirements, and to provide an orderly and respectful environment for all attendees, no placards, signs or banners will be permitted within the meeting room. Nothing herein shall restrict an individual's right to verbally express comments during the designated public comment period in accordance with this policy and meeting procedures or prohibit lawful expressive activity occurring outside the meeting room in areas otherwise permitted by law. No attendee shall obstruct in any way the entrances or exits to the hearing room.

7. Agenda | Meeting Minutes

The meeting agenda and all pertinent documents shall be available to the press and public at such public meetings and at least three days prior to the meeting at the Richland Township Municipal Building. The minutes and records of such meetings shall be available for review in accordance with the provisions of the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act, (65 Pa.C.S. § 701-716) and the Pennsylvania Right to Know Law (65 P.S. § 67.101, et seq).

B. LEGISLATIVE AND QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. These Procedures are intended to maintain proper decorum for the hearing, participation, and respect for all citizens and to maintain order.
2. These Procedures for legislative public hearings shall be posted on the Richland Township website.
3. These Procedures will be posted at the meeting location advising people attending the meeting of the hearing procedures.
4. Legislative public hearings are designed to allow residents and taxpayers in Richland Township to express comments regarding the subject matter of the public hearing. Legislative public hearings are not quasi-judicial public hearings; and those quasi-judicial public hearings, such as Zoning Hearing Board or Conditional Use hearings, shall be conducted according to these rules and regulations unless superseded by the laws applicable in those instances.
5. It shall be the policy of the Township Supervisors that the only regular participants in Legislative Public Hearings shall be citizens or taxpayers of the Township or their legal counsel or authorized representatives. At the discretion of the Presiding Officer, others may be permitted to speak at public hearings and may include anyone having registered a legitimate interest with the Township Secretary in any contemplated action or recommendation; anyone representing a group in the community; any employee of the Township or the legal counsel or authorized representative of the previously described persons.
6. Responses to public comment/testimony or questions will not be provided during the hearing, other than to clarify facts related to the subject matter. Public hearings of this nature are a one-way conversation.
7. The Township Manager, in his/her sole discretion, is authorized to request police presence at any public hearing, if he/she deems it necessary to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.
8. No attendee shall obstruct in any way the entrances or exits to the hearing room.
9. A sign-in sheet will be used for order of public comment/testimony.
10. Public participation and comment/testimony shall occur after the subject matter of the hearing has been discussed by the Board of Supervisors.

11. Individuals desiring to speak must be sworn in under oath by the Court Stenographer. The oath will take place as a group at the beginning of the hearing using the sign-in sheet. Individuals who speak must give their name prior to speaking and acknowledge that they took the oath. Individuals who arrive later will be required to take the oath prior to speaking.
12. Individuals desiring to testify shall announce their name and municipality of residence prior to testifying.
13. Comment/testimony may be made only by a person who has been recognized by the member of the Board of Supervisors (Presiding Officer) presiding at the public hearing.
14. Comment/testimony will be limited to no more than three minutes per person.
15. The Presiding Officer shall, in his or her sole discretion, be permitted to expand the individual comment period by no more than two minutes upon request from the individual. Thereafter, additional time may be allowed only upon motion approved by a majority of the Board of Supervisors.
16. Groups of people attending the meeting because of the same subject matter may designate one of the members to speak for the group.
17. No speaker will be allowed to surrender his/her time to any other person, or to call upon other persons for comment/testimony.
18. The resident or taxpayer of Richland Township shall testify from the lectern or other designated space, unless the resident or taxpayer is disabled and/or unable to stand.
19. All public comment/testimony will be addressed to the Board of Supervisors.
20. Members of the audience may not address other members of the audience, or argue, speak or yell back and forth at or to each other.
21. In order to facilitate the orderly conduct of the hearing, there shall be no foul or vulgar language used or gestures made during the hearing.
22. Comment/testimony should be substantive and not include any defamatory content and/or personal attacks on the integrity of others whether or not present.
23. Letters may be read during public comment/testimony subject to the allotted three-minute time limit for individual testimony. No extension shall be granted for residents or taxpayers reading a letter during testimony. Any letters cited or read may be submitted to the Township Manager.
24. Copies of any documents and/or materials reviewed or discussed during testimony shall be marked, made available to the Board and placed into the record.
25. At all times, each attendee shall respect the point of view of others. No comment disagreeing with another's point of view shall involve a personal attack on the character of others with a different view point.
26. Any conduct disruptive of the hearing and interfering with the business of the hearing, such as talking when not recognized by the Presiding Officer, talking beyond the allotted time and/or the use of a cell phone shall not be tolerated.
27. The Presiding Officer will rule out of order any speaker or comment which is defamatory, contentious, scandalous, impertinent, redundant or disruptive to the proceedings of the meeting.

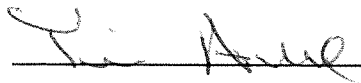
28. If the conduct and order of the hearing is no longer maintained, the Presiding Officer may recess the hearing to restore order so that the business of the hearing may be conducted when the hearing resumes.

29. Public comment and testimony during the Public Hearing shall not contain any personal attacks of any nature directed toward or against any applicant, respondent, Supervisor, employee of Richland Township, members of the audience or any other persons.

30. Legislative public hearings will conclude at 10:00 p.m., unless a majority of the Board of Supervisors votes to extend the deadline. To the extent practicable, any necessary continuation will be discussed at the hearing.

RESOLVED AND ADOPTED THIS 8th DAY OF June 2026.

ATTEST:



RICHLAND TOWNSHIP



Christopher Vanelli, Chairman



Kathleen M. Doyle, Vice-Chairman



Mason J. Smith, Member

RICHLAND TOWNSHIP, BUCKS COUNTY PUBLIC MEETING GUIDELINES

To ensure orderly and respectful public meetings, the following rules apply:

- Public comment is limited to Township residents, taxpayers, their representatives, or others recognized by the Presiding Officer.
- Speakers must first be recognized before speaking.
- Please state your name and municipality of residence for the record and sign the public comment sheet.
- Comments must relate to Township business or agenda items.
- Comments shall be directed at the Presiding Officer, not individual Board members or attendees.
- Each speaker is generally limited to one comment per topic and three (3) minutes speaking time.
- Disruptive, abusive, repetitive, or irrelevant conduct/comments are prohibited.
- The Presiding Officer may limit speaking time, maintain order, call recesses, or remove disruptive individuals if necessary.
- No placards, signs, or banners are permitted inside the meeting room.
- Entrances and exits must remain unobstructed at all times.
- Individuals needing accessibility accommodation may speak from a seated or designated accessible location.
- Quasi-judicial hearings, including Conditional Use and Zoning Hearing Board hearings, are conducted under separate legal procedures and may require sworn testimony.

Summary of RESOLUTION # 2026-18

Please see Full Resolution for all applicable regulations