

Dearborn Public Library Commission Public Comment Policy

Introduction:

This Public Comment Policy is established to provide a fair and transparent process for members of the public to address the Commission of Dearborn Public Library, in accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan, including the Open Meetings Act (Michigan Compiled Laws §15.261 et seq.). Public comments are an essential part of the democratic process, and the library Commission values input from the community. By adhering to this Public Comment Policy, Dearborn Public Library aims to foster an inclusive and participatory environment that encourages meaningful engagement with the community and adheres to the principles of Michigan State Law and the Open Meetings Act Michigan.

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the rules and procedures for public comments during Library Commission meetings in compliance with Michigan State Law, particularly the Open Meetings Act.

2. Scope:

This policy applies to all Library Commission meetings and any other committee or subcommittee meetings governed by the Open Meetings Act.

3. Definitions:

Public Comment: An opportunity for members of the public to address the Library Commission on matters within its jurisdiction.

Library Commission: The governing body of Dearborn Public Library responsible for making decisions on library-related policy matters.

4. General Guidelines:

4.1. The Library Commission welcomes public comments and recognizes the importance of public input.

4.2. Public comments will be accepted only during designated public comment periods on the meeting agenda.

4.3. Each member of the public in attendance at the meeting may be permitted to speak for up to three (3) minutes during designated public comment periods.

4.4. The three (3) minute time limit for public comment shall be enforced by the Chairperson or presiding officer equally upon all speakers.

4.5. All public comments must be addressed to the Library Commission as a whole, not individual Commission members or staff. It is not the practice of the Commission to respond directly to questions during the public comment portion of the meeting.

4.6. No materials may be distributed by members of the public during public comment. Any materials that a member of the public wants to be distributed to the Commission may submit them to the Library Director.

4.7. Signs, placards, banners, or similar items shall not be permitted at any time during a Commission meeting. This rule does not apply to a display board pertaining to an agenda item.

5. Compliance with the Open Meetings Act:

5.1. The Library Commission will adhere to the requirements of the Open Meetings Act (Michigan Compiled Laws §15.261 et seq.) in conducting meetings, including public comment sessions.

5.2. If applicable, the library will make reasonable accommodations to allow remote attendance for individuals with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). However, public comment must be made in-person at the public meeting.

6. Conduct and Content of Public Comments:

6.1. Acceptable Conduct:

- a) Public comments must be civil and respectful.
- b) Comments on physical appearance or character not related to job performance will not be tolerated. Infractions will result in the loss of remaining time, by order of the Chairperson or presiding officer, after one warning.
- c) Members of the audience are expected to respect the views of others and not interrupt or harass speakers. Persons not following this rule may be expelled from the building by order of the Chairperson or presiding officer after one warning.

6.2. Individuals who commit a breach of peace at the meeting may be removed by order of the Chairperson or presiding officer after one warning.

6.3. Comments must pertain to matters within the jurisdiction of the Library Commission or regarding a specific topic on the agenda.

6.4. The Library Commission chair or presiding officer shall enforce time limits equally upon all speakers, maintain order, and take appropriate measures to ensure compliance with this policy.

7. Sign-up Procedure:

7.1. Members of the public who wish to speak during the public comment period are encouraged to sign-up before the meeting has been called to order.

7.2. Sign-up may be done electronically through the library's website or in-person at the library administrative office.

7.3. Sign-up will be available on a first-come-first-serve basis. Members of the public who have signed-up shall be given priority to speak. Following signed-up speakers, others who wish to speak will be recognized by the Chairperson or presiding officer by a show of hands.

8. Amendment of Policy:

8.1. This Public Comment Policy may be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to align with changing legal requirements or organizational needs. Any amendments to the policy shall be subject to public notice and discussion and be in accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan.

9. Effective Date:

9.1. This Public Comment Policy shall take effect immediately upon approval by the Library Commission.

Approved and Adopted by the Library Commission of Dearborn Public Library on August 9, 2023.