

Decatur Housing Authority
Public Participation Policy for Board Meetings

Public participation at meetings of the Board of Commissioners (“Board”) of the Housing Authority of the City of Decatur, Georgia (“DHA”) is intended to provide residents and interested persons with the opportunity to comment on issues or topics that are within the purview of the Board. The Board welcomes public input and comments on the programs and operations of DHA. This input is valued and appreciated and the Board hopes that it will help lead to the successful implementation of meaningful affordable housing programs and services. It is essential that this input be provided in a manner that supports effective communication and understanding for all parties.

Public participation shall occur in accordance with the procedures set forth below:

1. Although the public has the right and is invited to attend meetings of the Board, no individual or group has the right to enter into the deliberations of the Board. With respect to Board meetings, unless input is solicited by the Board for a public hearing or similar event, communications by members of the public will be limited to the portion of the meeting designated on the agenda as the time for “non-agenda items”.
2. Speakers must register at the front desk and complete a public comment registration form. Registration will close five (5) minutes before the start of the meeting.
3. Speakers will appear individually and will be afforded attention and respect. When called upon, the person shall state his/her name; and, if speaking for an organization or other group, identify the group represented. Groups must select a maximum of two (2) speakers. No person may speak without first being recognized by the Chairperson. All remarks should be addressed to the Board as a whole, not to individual Commissioners, staff, or other individuals.
4. Each speaker has five (5) minutes to speak. Speakers are not allowed to cede their time to any other speaker.
 - With respect to the Board meetings, there shall be a cumulative limit to thirty minutes available for public comment. If requested by the Chairperson and approved by a majority vote of the Board, the time allocation for individuals and/or the cumulative limit may be altered based upon the number of persons registered to speak.
 - The Board has discretion to restrict comments that are repetitive or redundant.
 - The Board will restrict comments that are inappropriate or not relevant to business of the Board.
5. Courteous, respectful, and civil behavior is expected from all speakers and all persons attending a Board meeting. Personal attacks, abusive or intemperate language and unsubstantiated allegations leveled at Commissioners, staff, property managers, resident leaders or other residents are prohibited. Individuals who are disruptive may be given warning and will, if necessary, be removed from the meeting. If any individual is removed from a meeting as a result of disruptive behavior, then the individual may forfeit his or her right of re-entry to future Board meetings.
6. Written comments and/or literature may be accepted at Board meetings from:
 - Registered speakers, including speakers who are unable to complete their comments in the allotted time
 - Individuals who wish to speak but are unable to address the Board. As is the case with respect to oral communications, written materials will not be accepted if they are outside

the purview of the Board; contain personal attacks, abusive or intemperate language or unsubstantiated allegations; or relate to current or prospective bids.

7. All persons attending a Board meeting shall turn off or silence their cell phones while the meeting is in session. No cell phone use is permitted.
8. Current or prospective vendors wishing to present product or services for purchase should not use the public participation portion of a Board meeting for this purpose. Vendors will, as appropriate, be referred to procurement or finance staff.
9. Residents with specific property complaints or concerns will be referred to the appropriate Authority staff person present at the meeting.
10. Specific factual information or recitation of existing policy may be furnished in response to inquiries, but the Board shall not deliberate or decide regarding the information or concern presented during public comment.
11. The Board will have the discretion to withdraw a speaker's right to address the Board if any of the above requirements are violated.