



Ad Hoc Economic Development Committee

Meeting Meeting Date: 06/24/2020

SUBJECT MATTER:

Public comment;*

BACKGROUND:

Modified Guidelines for Public Comments to be used when the Board is meeting via videoconference during the COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency

On March 16, 2020, Texas Governor Greg Abbott temporarily suspended certain requirements within the Texas Open Meetings Act (TOMA) to help reduce the potential transmission of COVID-19. These provisions relate to the public health pandemic emergency. The Township began using videoconferencing for their March 25, 2020 Board meeting, and will continue to use this format until normal Township operations have resumed. The following guidelines will be used to allow the public to provide public comment in accordance with the Open Meetings Act and have been modified for the purpose of the Board's and Committee meetings held by videoconference.

Participation by members of the public in open meetings of the Ad Hoc Economic Development Committee is welcomed and encouraged. A "public comment" agenda item will be included at the beginning of all regular Committee meeting agendas. To produce the most efficient and effective process for allowing constituents to address the Committee, The Woodlands Township Board of Directors and Committees accepts public comments in accordance with State Law and the following Guidelines for Participating in Public Meetings, which have been adjusted due to the use of videoconferencing during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency:

- Each person wishing to address the Committee must call in via phone prior to the conclusion of the "public comments" agenda item. The phone number will be included on the posted agenda.
- Individuals who wish to make general announcements, address a topic that is not included on the agenda, or who wish to address specific agenda items must do so under the "public comments" agenda item at the beginning of the meeting.
- Individuals will be limited to a total of three (3) minutes regardless of the number of topics, and individuals who provide and utilize a translator will be limited to a total of six (6) minutes.
- Speakers will be taken in the order in which they call in.
- The Committee consists of three Woodlands Township Board of Directors. State Law prohibits the Township Board from formally acting on a specific item or public comment unless it appears on the posted agenda. Therefore, any Board discussion of items not included on the posted agenda is limited to questions for clarification and whether or not the item should be placed on a future Board agenda.
- Speakers may express their opinions or viewpoints on an issue, but are not permitted to participate in the debate on an issue.

- Speakers will not use profanity.
- Comments from speakers can be made to the Committee as a whole or to an individual director(s).
- Consistent with in-person meetings, public comment will only be taken during the “public comments” agenda item.

Additional notes for those wishing to call in for Public Comment:

- When calling in, you will be placed in a queue, and you will be called upon in the order in which your call was received, and only during the “public comments” agenda item.
- If you receive a busy signal when calling in and the “public comments” period has not concluded, please hang up and call back. The Committee will make every effort to ensure that all callers have an opportunity to speak.
- If you are watching the video of the meeting when you are called upon to speak, please mute the volume on your computer before speaking to avoid audio feedback for Directors. There is a brief lag between the audio and video feeds.
- After you have been called upon, you may disconnect from the phone call and continue to watch through the live stream broadcast at <http://www.thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov/778/Meeting-Videos>.

To call in to the June 24, 2020 Ad Hoc Economic Development Committee meeting to provide public comment, you may call any of the numbers listed below. For the best quality audio, it is recommended to use one of the local numbers:

- 346-248-7799 or
- 669-900-6833 or
- 253-215-8782 or
- 312-626-6799 or
- 929-205-6099 or
- 301-715-8592 or
- 888-788-0099 (Toll Free) or
- 877-853-5247 (Toll Free)

Once you have connected, you will need to enter ID: 899 5352 0040, then enter the pound sign “#” on your telephone keypad.

These call in numbers are active for the June 24, 2020 Ad Hoc Economic Development Committee meeting only. New phone numbers will be issued for each future meeting in this format during the public health pandemic emergency.