



Ground Rules for In-person Public Meetings

The Town of Stevensville needs to continue holding public meetings to conduct essential business during the COVID-19 pandemic. The below ground rules describe the *Town Council's* expectations and approach to conduct public meetings in a manner that honors the Town's constitutional and statutory obligations relating to open meetings and public participation and the federal and state government recommendations for public health and safety.

In the interests of the health and safety of all meeting participants, the following rules apply to in person meetings:

1. Physical distance of **six (6) feet** must be observed by all attendees, including staff and elected officials. Seating will be arranged to accommodate distancing and attendees must refrain from moving provided seating.
2. Masks **must** be worn while entering or moving around during a meeting. Once seated, an attendee may remove their mask.
3. Capacity of the meeting space will be limited to the available number of seats. If capacity of the room is reached, citizens are encouraged to participate through other available options provided.

In addition to the above ground rules for health and safety, the Council would like to also establish the following expectations for participant conduct during public meetings:

1. **This is a public discussion, not a debate.** The purpose is *not* to win an argument, but to hear many points of view and explore many options and solutions.
2. **Everyone is encouraged to participate.**
3. **No one or two individuals should dominate a discussion.** If you have already voiced your ideas, let others have an opportunity. When you speak, be brief and to the point.
4. **When you speak, state your name and where you live.** In a public meeting, it is helpful to know who is speaking as well as where they live in the community.
5. **One person speaks at a time.** Refrain from side conversations. Pay attention to the person speaking.
6. **Listen to and respect other points of view.**
7. **Do your best to understand the pros and cons of every option,** not just those you prefer. Be as objective and fair-minded as you can be.

A meeting may be postponed and re-scheduled virtually if these ground rules cannot be observed or if participants become disorderly.