

At the Exeter Township Board of Supervisors meeting on 3/23/2009, Supervisors Chairwoman, Dona Starr, made a public announcement in regards to the public comments portion of the meetings. The statement below was prompted by numerous occasions when comments were harsh and inappropriate and prevented the necessary flow of business at meetings. Ms. Starr explained the laws governing public comment and the guidelines that the residents are expected to follow.

Before we start the public comment portion of our meeting I would like to make a statement concerning our Township meetings and the more recent conduct of several speakers. According to State Law, The Second Class Township Code Section 603, "The board of supervisors shall meet for the transaction of business at least once each month at a time and place determined by the board of supervisors." Section 605, (a), "the board of supervisors shall provide for the recording of minutes of its proceedings and other books it may find necessary in the performance of its duties."

There is nothing in the Code requiring a Township website nor is there anything in the Code that requires a Township to video the meetings. There is nothing in the Code that states minutes must be verbatim and the Sunshine Law Right to Know Act says the minutes should include citizens and taxpayers names who appeared officially and the SUBJECT of their COMMENTS. The minutes are purely a recording of our business transacted in the performance of our duties.

The Sunshine Law goes on to say that townships must set aside a period of time at each advertised regular and special meeting to allow residents and taxpayers to address the board of supervisors **on any matter before the board**. If there is not enough time for public comment the comment period may be deferred until the next regular meeting or a special meeting may be held before the next regular meeting to receive public comment. Townships should create a written policy for conducting public meetings, and providing for COMMENT periods. A copy of our written policy is on each seat this evening for your review. Townships must provide the public comment period before any official action. To satisfy these requirements townships may do ONE of two things: Hold a comment period before each official action; OR Hold the public comment period at the beginning of the meeting before any action is taken. If your township holds the comment period at the beginning of the

meeting and later brings up an item or considers an action that is not on the agenda, it should again allow for public comment before voting.

This Board has been very resident/taxpayer friendly and has tolerated what may be very well construed as harassment at our business meetings. This is a meeting to conduct township business and it is not going to be used for any other purpose. As we approach the election for the office of supervisor, we especially will not allow board meetings to be used as a forum for political comment on those who choose to run for these offices.

We have allowed questions during the COMMENT period. We have allowed interruptions of comments and questions during our business meetings. We have allowed comments about any issue including statements that have been scandalous, impertinent and redundant. Also, we have allowed comments for no discernible purpose other than that of disrupting or preventing the conduct of the business of the meeting and this will not be entertained by this chairperson any longer.

We will have a Comment period at the beginning of our meeting as the law requires and NOT before or during an item on the agenda. If any additional items come up during the meeting that were not on the agenda that evening, the public will have an opportunity to COMMENT before any official action is taken as required by law.

The agenda is online and at the Township by noon on the Friday before the meeting. You are free to ask questions of the Township staff concerning anything on the agenda. If there are additional questions, you may always write a letter or send an email to the staff or to any of the supervisors and we will answer your concerns.

Does the Board have any additional comments?
If not, we will open the floor to Public Comment.