

Town Hall and Town Facility Visitor Policy

I. Purpose

The Town of Huntington seeks to protect the safety and security of those who visit Huntington Town Hall and other Town of Huntington facilities, and facilitate the provision of Town of Huntington services and operations in a timely, effective, respectful and safe manner. Further, the Town of Huntington seeks to further ensure that public meetings are conducted in an orderly, efficient, and dignified manner.

II. Policy

All visitors have the right to feel safe, secure, and respected during their visits to Huntington Town Hall and other Town facilities. Accordingly, this policy establishes security procedure, visitor protocol, and rules of decorum at public meetings.

III. Procedure¹

A. Overview: Courteous behavior is expected by all visitors to Town facilities. Visitors are expected to comply with reasonable requests by members of the Department of Public Safety or other appropriate peace officer or law enforcement official. Visitors who act in an abusive, intimidating, discourteous, threatening, or harassing manner, or refuse to comply with reasonable requests by members of the Department of Public Safety or other appropriate peace officer or law enforcement official, may be denied entry or removed from Town facilities by a member of the Department of Public Safety or other appropriate peace officer or law enforcement official.

- A member of the Department of Public Safety may also deny entry to a visitor previously ejected from a Town facility within the past year.

¹ Town facilities other than Town Hall are subject to modified security procedures as determined by the Director of Public Safety.

- In addition, the Department of Public Safety may deny entry to a Town facility to any individual that the Director of the Department of Public Safety, or his/her designee, has determined poses a security risk or has engaged in abusive, intimidating, or harassing behavior towards a Town employee. For the purposes of this section, such abusive, intimidating, or harassing behavior may take the form of written, electronic or oral communications.

B. Town Hall Security Procedures:

- All persons entering Town Hall shall display photo identification and are subject to enhanced screening.
- All personal belongings are subject to search.
- Visitors to Town Hall shall visibly display at all times the identification badge provided to them by Public Safety.
- Refusal to comply with these requirements may result in denial of entry to Town Hall or removal from Town Hall by a member of the Department of Public Safety or other appropriate peace officer or law enforcement official.

C. Prohibited Items at all Town Facilities

- Weapons of any kind (firearms, knives, pepper spray, sharp objects and other dangerous items), except firearms are permitted to be carried by police and peace officers in uniform and/or on-duty.
- Other items that Public Safety deems could be used as a weapon.
- Liquids, other than in a clear, sealed bottle.
- Backpacks
- Large bags, unless necessary to carry paperwork related to the person's visit to the Town facility.
- Visitors with prohibited items may be denied entry or removed from Town facilities by a member of the

Department of Public Safety or other appropriate peace officer or law enforcement official.

D. Smoking and Vaping

- Smoking and vaping at Town facilities are prohibited. This prohibition applies to both indoor and outdoor areas of Town premises, including but not limited to all buildings, grounds, parking lots/ areas, and courtyards.

E. Rules of Decorum at Public Meetings

The following rules are intended to ensure that public meetings and town business are conducted in a timely, efficient, safe and orderly manner and with due respect for the rights of all in attendance:

1. Members of the audience shall not display signs, placards, banners, or similar items at any time in the Town Board Room that obstruct the view of other audience members. In no event shall signs, placards, banners, or similar items be illuminated or be attached to any pole, stick or other device.
2. No video or audio recording shall be played by a speaker.
3. Courteous behavior shall be observed at all times.
4. Audience members shall not speak, shout, cheer, applaud, or jeer when someone is addressing the Town Board, Planning Board, or Zoning Board if it interferes with or disrupts the orderly conduct of the proceedings.
5. Speakers should not address the public during time allotted to speak. Speakers should address the board as a whole, not individual board members.
6. Speakers should not use vulgar, abusive, inappropriate, threatening, intimidating, or harassing language when addressing the board members.

7. The Supervisor or Chair shall preside over and control the meeting. The Supervisor or Chair shall act as, or designate, a timekeeper during the public participation segment of the meeting agenda or during a public hearing. Each person shall limit his or her remarks to three (3) minutes or the time established by the Supervisor/Chair. The Supervisor/Chair may set different time limits on the remarks of speakers on a particular subject based on the number of speakers wishing to address a single subject. No speaker may allot any unused portion of his/her speaking time to another speaker.

8. During a public hearing, the speaker should limit his/her remarks to the specific topic of the public hearing. If the speaker deviates from the specific topic of the public hearing, his/her remaining time may be forfeited.

9. Any document/items that need to be submitted to the members of a board shall be handed to the Public Safety officer present, who will then deliver such items to the dais. At no time should a speaker or any other member of the public approach the dais unless instructed to by the Supervisor or Chair.

10. Taping/video recording of meetings is permitted with the provision that recordings be carried out unobtrusively and in a manner that does not detract from, or distract, others during the proceedings.

11. During public meetings any person engaging in behavior that impedes, disrupts or disturbs the orderly conduct of proceedings (e.g., by shouting out, refusing to observe allotted speaking time, being unduly repetitious, etc.) shall comply promptly with a call to order by the Supervisor or Chair, and failure to comply with such call to order shall be grounds for immediate ejection from the building by a member of the Department of Public Safety or other appropriate law enforcement official.

12. Repeated refusal to come to order or comply peacefully with an order to leave the building shall be deemed an act of disorderly conduct and subject the person(s) to arrest.

13. Any person ejected from a public meeting may be denied access to future public meetings.