The public process is here for YOU, but it only works when YOU get involved.

Elected bodies regularly hold public meetings to maintain transparency and allow citizen participation.

Important decisions that affect your community deserve your attention and your input – but speaking up can be intimidating.

Giving public comment:

Most meetings provide an opportunity for public comment. While specifics general participation sections and time limits vary from government to government, the public comment period is always your time to be heard.

You can easily determine when this will be by checking the meeting agenda.

Agendas are typically available within a week of the meeting. If public comment is not listed on the agenda, you can call the clerk of council to ask if and when there will be an opportunity to speak on the topic. Some governments require that you sign up to give public comment. If that’s the case, a sign-up sheet will be available when you arrive.

Staff are usually available to answer any questions you have prior to the meeting’s start.

Remember while drafting your comments:

1. You have a right to be heard on issues that concern you.
2. Make it personal. Focus on your story more than data. Share with your elected officials why this issue matters to you.
3. Know your audience. Remember that you are speaking to the council in front of you, but you are also being heard by the community behind you. Try to influence both audiences with your comments.
4. Be respectful. No one responds well to being attacked, so focus on how you can work together to solve the problem. Use your manners – please and thank you go a long way.
5. Be brief. Most councils have a time limit (find out what it is in advance), and those that don’t probably want to get home and have dinner. Make every word count.

Now, get out there and SPEAK UP!