

To: Town of Union Vale Residents Attending Meetings
From: Supervisor Betsy Maas
March 15th, 2018

Town Board Meeting Procedures

Your local government conducts work in meetings and hearings that are always open to the public. Under the Open Meetings Law in the State of NY the Town Board is required to hold all meetings in public whenever there is a quorum present (or more than two members); but in addition we feel it is extremely important that the residents are informed and understand what goes in to the making of public policy in Union Vale.

Whenever we meet to conduct public business our “proceedings must be convened open to the public” and we must give proper notice of our meetings and the easiest place for you to check is on our town website.

While any member of the public is welcome to attend, and we encourage you to do so, the law does “not require the public body to offer the public an opportunity to be heard”. “The right to participate (that is, to speak) at a meeting may be limited to the members of the public body itself. A public body may however, permit public participation and may provide rules for speakers to follow at meetings”.

To that end, and in an effort to keep the lines of communication flowing in both directions I am establishing the following meeting rules for use to try. If they are successful and enhance our communication positively, we will keep them, if not we will adapt them.

1. We will permit comments on agenda items and this will take place after the Supervisor and Board members have made their remarks or reports.
2. We will also permit “comments on town issues” at the end of the meeting.
 - a. This is intended as a time to focus on important issues. Trivial issues will not be entertained at the Board meeting, so as not to waste anyone’s time.
 - b. For non-important or subjective issues, please call the Town Supervisor or a Town Board member for assistance or to share an opinion.
3. Speakers may comment for no more than 3 minutes, so as not to postpone the rest of the meeting.
 - a. Speakers will be given a *20 second warning* so they do not run out of time to make an important point.
4. Speakers cannot cede their time to another speaker.
5. Comments are supposed to be directed to the Supervisor who will ask someone on the Board to answer during the meeting or will take notes and respond later on the telephone.
6. Finally, presenters to the Town Board need to direct their comments to the Town Board.