

PRC Guidance on Public Comments Related to County Operations

The Arlington County Park and Recreation Commission is an advisory body to the County Board on planning, programming, budgeting, enhancements and protection of parks and their use. The PRC receives public comment at the beginning of each monthly meeting. Individual comments are limited to 3 minutes. On occasion the public comment period is used to express concerns about County policies or activities, or about communications with the County staff. This guidance outlines the steps the PRC will generally take to address such comments.

Public Comment

- 1) Residents may use the PRC public comment period for up to 3 minutes to raise any issue or concern that is within the mission purview of the Commission. If a resident seeks PRC intervention or advice, that request must be clearly stated during the 3-minute public comment.
- 2) It is recommended when seeking PRC assistance with a concern to notify the chair of the issue at least 24 hours before the meeting. Written comments or requests may also be directed to a member of the PRC without appearing at a commission meeting.
- 3) Any request for assistance should succinctly describe the problem, how it affects the commenter, others, or the community at large, and the cause of the problem as it is understood.
- 4) Any prior attempts to resolve an issue with County staff should be noted.
- 5) Thoughts on solutions may be included.

PRC Steps

- 1) As an advisory body to the County Board, it is not the role of the PRC to advocate on behalf of commenters with the County Manager or the Department of Parks and Recreation.
- 2) The chair may ask members and/or staff for comments or questions to clarify the issue, or, if possible, to attempt to resolve it.
- 3) The chair may ask staff whether the issue has already been raised to them, and if it is being addressed, and/or to make further inquiry into the issue raised and provide members further information on county policy relevant to the issue, as well as any DPR involvement with the issue. To the extent practicable, this should be done prior to the meeting where the comment is made.
- 4) The PRC may advise commenters to contact DPR for further attempts to resolve the issue or assist commenters in determining the appropriate office within DPR to contact.
- 5) When appropriate the PRC may advise residents to communicate directly with another, non-DPR, entity within the County government.
- 6) If, after consulting with staff, the PRC chair and members determine that an issue raised by a commenter reflects questionable policy or a systematic misapplication of policy, or if it represents an issue the County Board should be aware of, the PRC may prepare an advisory letter to the Board concerning the issue. Additionally, the PRC may send an advisory letter if it determines that the issue may be resolvable by staff, but that the issue and/or resolution may relate to or affect other aspects of county operations.