THORNTON TOWNSHIP
COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

ORDINANCE NO. 22-004

AN ORDINANCE REGARDING PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONDUCT AT PUBLIC MEETINGS OF THORNTON TOWNSHIP, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

ADOPTED BY THE
TOWNSHIP BOARD OF THORNTON TOWNSHIP

TIFFANY A. HENYARD, Township Supervisor
LORETTA C. WELLS, Township Clerk

JOYCE WASHINGTON
GERALD JONES
DARLENE GRAY EVERETT
CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ
Trustees

Published in pamphlet form by authority of the Township Board of Thornton Township, Cook County, Illinois, this 9th day of November, 2022.

Del Galdo Law Group, LLC – Township Attorney – 1441 South Harlem Avenue, Berwyn, Illinois 60402

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COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

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AN ORDINANCE REGARDING PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONDUCT AT PUBLIC MEETINGS OF THORNTON TOWNSHIP, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

WHEREAS, Thornton Township, Cook County, Illinois (the "Township"), is a duly organized and existing township and unit of local government created under the provisions of the laws of the State of Illinois, and is operating under the provisions of the Illinois Township Code, 60 ILCS 1/1-1, *et seq*. (the "Code"), and all laws amendatory thereto; and

WHEREAS, the Township Supervisor (the "Supervisor"), the Township Clerk (the "Clerk"), and the Township Board of Trustees (the "Township Board") are committed to ensuring the efficient operation of government; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.06 of the Open Meetings Act (the "OMA") (5 ILCS 120/2.06) permits any person an opportunity to address public officials during a meeting pursuant to the rules established and recorded by the public body; and

WHEREAS, in order to clarify the Township's public comment policy, the Township Board wishes to adopt a new public comment policy which shall replace any and all previously approved public comment policies; and

WHEREAS, in order to allow for the Board to conduct the business of the Township, the Board has determined that it is necessary to adopt reasonable rules of order and decorum; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Board of Thornton Township, Cook County, Illinois, as follows:

Section 1. The statements set forth in the preamble to this Ordinance are found to be true and correct and are incorporated into this Ordinance as if set forth in full.

Section 2. The Township Board hereby adopts the following rules for public comment, decorum, and conduct at Township Board meetings:

Public comment shall occur during each Township Board meeting as required by the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/2.06), which may be amended from time to time. The public shall be allowed to make comments during a Township Board meeting at the time designated on the meeting agenda, subject to the following procedures and guidelines:

(1) Prior to meetings, the Township Board will make available a sign-in sheet, where prospective speakers must print their names, and may, if they chose to, disclose their contact information and the subject matter upon which they wish to

address the board. A commenter will still be allowed to comment, even if the commenter opts to not disclose their contact information or the topic they wish to address;

(2) Speakers will be recognized for comment during the public comment period only if they have completed the required portions of the sign-in sheet (their name), and will be called in the order in which they have signed in;

(3) When recognized to comment, each speaker must begin by stating his or her name, and shall be permitted three (3) minutes to address the board. This period shall not include the board members' responses, if any, to the speaker;

(4) Speakers will be recognized to speak only once per board meeting, and no speaker may utilize the three (3) minute allotment of any other individual;

(5) Speakers are requested, but not required, to restrict their comments and questions to the subject matter as indicated on the sign-in sheet;

(6) Speakers shall not be permitted to read the statements of individuals who are not present at the meeting into the record unless (i) authorized to do so by the Supervisor; or (ii) the individual contacts the office of the Township Clerk twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting to request that his or her statement be read into the record by another; and

(7) The Supervisor may cut off or stop a speaker if the public comment is repetitious or disruptive. No abusive or threatening language, or unruly conduct shall be tolerated or allowed.

(8) The Supervisor shall preserve order and decorum. Any person who engages in abusive, threatening or disorderly behavior when addressing the Township Board or members of the public may be deemed out-of-order by the Supervisor and their time ceased to address the Township Board. Any person engaging in unruly or disruptive behavior, which shall include inhibiting the Township Board from conducting the business of the meeting, may be removed from the Township Board meeting.

(9) The total time allotted for public comment shall generally be thirty (30) minutes, unless a majority of the Township Board agrees to extend the time allotted for that specific meeting.

The public comment portion of Township Board meetings is designed to allow the public the ability to address the public body on government affairs pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act and the procedures set forth in this policy. Public officials are not required to engage in debate, make themselves available for abusive or harassing behavior by a member of the public, or to provide on-the-spot answers to

members of the public on the topics that are raised by the public during the public comment portion of Township Board meetings.

Further, the Township Board further appoints the Township attorney to act as the parliamentarian of the meeting. As the parliamentarian, the Township attorney shall advise the board on parliamentary procedure and to assist the chair of the meeting to keep the meeting orderly.

Section 3. All prior actions of the Township's officials, employees and agents with respect to the subject matter of this Ordinance are hereby expressly ratified.

Section 4. The provisions of this Ordinance are hereby declared to be severable, and should any provision of this Ordinance be determined to be in conflict with any law, statute or regulation by a court of competent jurisdiction, said provision shall be excluded and deemed inoperative, unenforceable and as though not provided for herein, and all other provisions shall remain unaffected, unimpaired, valid and in full force and effect.

Section 5. All Township code provisions, ordinances, resolutions, rules and orders, or parts thereof, in conflict herewith are, to the extent of such conflict, hereby superseded.

Section 6. This Ordinance shall be immediately in full force and effect after passage and approval.

[Signature page follows]

PASSED by the Township Board of Thornton Township, Cook County, Illinois, on the 9th day of November, 2022, by the following roll-call vote:

Washington:	NO
Jones:	YES
Everett:	YES
Gonzalez:	YES
Supervisor Henyard:	YES

APPROVED this 9th day of November, 2022.

[redacted]

Tiffany A. Henyard
Township Supervisor

ATTEST:

[redacted]

Loretta C. Wells
Township Clerk

COUNTY OF COOK)
) SS
STATE OF ILLINOIS)

CLERK'S CERTIFICATE

I, Loretta C. Wells, certify that I am the elected and duly qualified Clerk of Thornton Township, Cook County, Illinois (the "Township") and, as such, I am the keeper of the records and files of the Township and its Supervisor and Trustees (collectively, the "Township Board"). I further certify as follows:

Attached to this Certificate is a true, correct and complete copy of Township Ordinance No. 22-004, entitled:

AN ORDINANCE REGARDING PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONDUCT AT PUBLIC MEETINGS OF THORNTON TOWNSHIP, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

This Ordinance was passed and approved by the Township Board at a duly noticed meeting held on the 9th day of November 2022. I do further certify that a quorum of said Township Board was present at said meeting, and that the Township Board complied with all the requirements of the Illinois Open Meetings Act in connection with said meeting.

Given under my hand and official seal at Thornton Township, Cook County, Illinois, this 9th day of November 2022.

Loretta C. Wells
Township Clerk

(SEAL)