



“Never doubt that a small group of
thoughtful, committed citizens
can change the world; indeed,
it's the only thing that ever has.”
- Margaret Mead

Swissvale Residents' Guide to Borough Council Meetings

Meeting Basics

When: Agenda Meetings - last Wednesday of the month, 7 pm. Regular/Legislative Meetings - first Wednesday of the month, 7 pm. Meetings should be announced on the [Borough website](#), including any changes due to holidays.

Where: Swissvale Borough Building, 7560 Roslyn Street, corner Roslyn Street, and S. Braddock, 2nd floor.

Parking: Small number of spaces in the borough lot across Roslyn. Accessible parking across Roslyn from the accessible entrance. Street parking on Noble, and farther down Roslyn in front of Master's Hardware and beyond. *Note: Several spots in the lot and around the building are reserved for borough employees.*

Buses: 59, 61A, and P71 stops within 1-2 blocks from either direction on Noble Street or Woodstock Ave.

Entrances: The entrance is up the flight of exterior stairs on Roslyn Street, through the double doors. The chambers are on the second floor, up the inside stairs and through the entryway to the right. Agendas and comment sign up are available at the podium on the left of the main chambers entrance. There is an **accessible entrance** to the right of the exterior stairs, through the first brown door, under the awning. You may need to buzz to be let in. The elevator is inside.

Signing up for Public Comment

If you are interested in bringing an issue to council, you can sign up for “Public Comment” before the meeting begins. The sign-up sheet is located on a podium to the left of the door to the chambers as you enter. You must provide your name and address. Identifying your topic is optional. If you arrive after the sign-up sheet has been collected, you can still speak after everyone on the list has been called; the council president typically asks “is there anyone else for public comment?”

The beginning of the meeting and how to comment

Residents attending the meeting sit in rows of chairs facing the council. The council president, in the center of the horseshoe on the dayus, calls the meeting to order at 7 pm. This involves conducting a roll call and, for Regular/Legislative meetings, saying the pledge, and hearing an invocation offered by a local pastor/clergy.

As soon as order is called, the council president begins Public Comment, reading the names in order as written on the sheet. If you have signed up to comment, and the president reads your name, approach the microphone to the right-center of the wooden-gated area (not through the gates). State your name and address before beginning to comment. The council president may limit the amount of time each commenter may use. This is only typical when there are many people for comment.

During the commenting time, commenters can both comment and ask questions. The council may respond or ask the commenter questions. After all signed-up commenters have spoken, the president generally asks if there are any others for public comment. You can stand at this point, whether or not you have signed up, and ask to speak. You can also ask questions during the remainder of the meeting.

General Meeting Overview and What to Expect

The council president and borough manager are responsible for the agenda. Unfortunately, agendas are not currently available in advance, only on the day of the meeting. Council members only receive the agendas a few hours in advance at most. The council moves quickly through the agenda, and some information discussed is not available during the meeting. For example, during committee and department reports, members say the report is “on file in the borough office,” and they do not give details. Very occasionally there is a single copy of these reports available at the meeting to be passed around amongst residents in attendance. You can request to see these reports outside of meetings by visiting the borough office during their open hours.

During the meeting, council members and other officials sit in a horseshoe at the far end of the room. The council president, who presides over meetings, sits in the center of the horseshoe. To the president’s left are the solicitor (borough’s legal representation), and the mayor. To the right of the president is the borough manager, and the borough engineer (contracted), if attending, sits to the right of the manager. Each official has a nameplate and microphone. Currently, the microphones function inconsistently. At the ends of the horseshoe are the public works director and chief of police (left) and the administrative staff (right).

Agenda Setting Meetings:

The council discusses the agenda for the legislative meeting to be held the following week. Anyone who wants to introduce a new issue to council can bring their issue to this meeting to get it on the following week’s agenda.

Regular or “Legislative” Meetings:

The council discusses and votes on, as needed, new and old borough business. Even if a resident’s concern was not introduced in the agenda meeting, they can still speak at the legislative meeting.

Executive Sessions:

Executive sessions take place before and after meetings and are not open to the public. Council must announce that they have met or will meet in executive session and give a specific reason. Only certain topics can be discussed in executive session, and no decisions can be made or voted on during these sessions. [More info here.](#)

What if you have an issue but cannot attend council meetings?

Complaints and Police Tips can be made on the [borough’s website here](#). You can contact the Borough office with questions and concerns at 412-271-7101. No borough employee or council member emails are publicly available on the borough website.

Meeting Minutes

Unfortunately, no agenda meeting minutes are currently kept or ever publicly available. Regular/legislative meeting minutes are available [on the borough website going back to 2015](#). However, minutes are typically not available online until months after meetings. Residents can also visit the borough office to request past meeting agendas or minutes that have been ratified in a subsequent meeting.