



TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING
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PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING/MEETING FORMAT

This summary guide has been prepared to explain the public meeting process and hearing process used by the Planning and Zoning Commission as they review and decide upon applications.

The meetings are recorded for sound and are video recorded for live local cable television. Copies are available within a few days for a nominal fee. Minutes of the meeting are also available within a few days of the meeting.

The Commission consists of nine (9) members and three (3) alternates appointed by the Town Council. Five (5) affirmative (yes) votes are typically required to approve any application.

BASIC COURTESY

The Chairman of the Commission will ensure that everyone has an opportunity to be heard and will maintain control of the meeting. We ask all participants in the public hearing process to be courteous and respectful of everyone in attendance. Please do not interrupt a speaker and do not participate in conversations during the hearings. Please turn off all electronic devices at the start of the meeting. The Commission strives to conduct a fair and impartial hearing. Your cooperation is appreciated.

HEARING PROCESS

If you are interested in speaking on a public hearing agenda item be advised that each application is reviewed individually and the following steps are followed:

1. At the beginning of the Public Hearing the first thing the Commission's Secretary will do is to read the agenda and public notice into the record, then he will list and briefly describe the application and the documents received in the file.
2. The applicant will then present the application in detail with a presentation which will allow the Commission members and the public the opportunity to better understand what is proposed.
3. The Commission members will ask questions of the applicant or of Town staff during or at the end of the presentation.
4. The Chairman will ask for members of the public who wish to speak about the application. Those wishing to speak should form a line behind the podium and microphone.
5. Those wishing to support the application will speak first.
6. Then he will ask for those who oppose the application to come forward.
7. The Chair will also ask those who do not wish to be classified as either in support or in opposition to come forward.
8. Individual Commission members may ask questions of the public regarding their testimony before you leave the podium.

9. After all public testimony is received the applicant and his/her representatives will be provided an opportunity to respond to all questions and comments and summarize the arguments for why the application is appropriate for approval.
10. After everyone has had a full opportunity to speak, all questions have been answered and all information has been received the Commission Chair will ask the applicant to be seated and the Commission members will discuss whether it is appropriate to close the hearing.
11. After the Commission votes to close the hearing they will deliberate on the application and discuss the testimony received, the issues and regulations to review.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

If you wish to speak please raise your hand and wait to be recognized by the Chair, come forward to the microphone/podium, identify yourself by name and address, speak loudly and clearly into the microphone in order to facilitate proper recording of comments. If you have questions address all comments directly to the Chair and not to the applicant or other members of the public. Be advised that this is your opportunity to ask questions and make comments on the application because once the hearing is closed no additional testimony from the public or the applicant will be permitted. We ask that you focus your comments and questions on the specifics of the application and the Town's regulations governing the proposal. If other speakers have already made your point, let the Commissioners know that you agree with the previous remarks and avoid repeating issues. When you finish your remarks remain at the microphone in case the Commission members have questions regarding your testimony.

If you are not interested in speaking you may also submit written testimony.

It is important to note that once the hearing is closed no additional public comment may be received.

CLOSING THE HEARING

A member of the Commission will make a motion to close the hearing which must be seconded by another member and voted upon by all members. They will not consider voting on the application until the hearing has been closed. A hearing may be continued to a future meeting date for a number of reasons including: other boards, commissions and staff have not had the opportunity to fully review the application, members may want to view the site, more information about the application is needed or the Commission members may require revisions to the plans.

MAKING THE DECISION

The members may also offer reasons they are considering to reach a decision. The project is evaluated based upon the Town's regulations found in either the zoning or subdivision regulations.

The Commission will consider several possible actions;

The Commission may:

- Approve the application as submitted
- Approve it with stipulation, conditions or modifications
- Table action to a future meeting, or
- In rare cases, deny the application.

A motion to approve, deny or continue is typically offered as the deliberation dwindles. The motion must be seconded and then a vote is taken.

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

The agenda may also contain applications that do not require a public hearing. In these cases the Connecticut General Statutes do not require public comment.

Towards the end of the meeting agenda you may notice an item entitled “Public Comments”, the Commission has established an opportunity for general public comments on any subject of interest to the Commission.

This meeting shall be concluded by no later than 11 pm unless the Commission votes to continue past this time.

CONTACTING TOWN STAFF

The public is welcome to view all information submitted as part of any application at the Planning Department during normal business hours. If you have to leave the meeting before a decision is rendered you may call the Planning Department at (860) 721-2838 to get the results of the meeting.