Public Hearing Guidance (ZBA & PB)

Meeting Schedule

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) regular public meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of each month but are subject to change over the course of the year.

Planning Board (PB) regular public meetings are held on the first and third Thursday of each month but are subject to change over the course of the year.

Meetings are never scheduled on official City holidays and meetings falling on major religious holidays may be canceled by the Chair.

The regular annual meeting schedule is published on the City website each January.

Meeting agendas are posted to the City Calendar at least 48 hours in advance and include information on how to attend, either in person or remotely via Zoom.

Public Hearings

Public hearings for permit applications occur during regular public meetings and are scheduled within sixty-five (65) days of receipt of a complete application, in accordance with MGL c.40A.

Notices for public hearings are posted at least two (2) weeks in advance of the meeting date when the hearing will occur, in accordance with MGL c.40A.

Hearing Conduct

Applicants are required to attend the scheduled hearing for their permit application, but may be represented by relevant professionals (i.e., architect, landscape architect, attorney). Failure to appear may result in unfavorable action by the Board, including application denial.

For virtual meetings, all participants enter Zoom as attendees. Applicants and their representatives are promoted to panelists to present to the Board. Other participants can speak during the public comment period of hearing.

Applicants are responsible for presenting their own permit applications to the Board. Administrative staff of the PB or ZBA cannot represent an Applicant and cannot present on their behalf.

When Applicants attend the public hearing for their case, they should:

- Be respectful to all Board Members, Staff, and other attendees.
- Present a thorough yet concise overview of the proposal containing but not limited to the following:
    - The permits being sought
    - Relevant plan sets
    - Renderings of the proposal
    - Shadow studies
    - Site map
    - Other information, as applicable

- Be realistic about timelines if requesting a continuance – consider the time it takes to produce follow up information for the Board.
- Submit updated or additional information prior to subsequent meetings.
- Additional information must be submitted at least seven (7) days prior to a meeting date.

The general order of Board operations for public hearings is:

1. Applicant Presentation
2. Public Comment (2 minutes per person)
3. Board Discussion
4. Board Vote

Continuances

Applicants may withdraw an application without prejudice at any time prior to the advertisement of a public hearing for the application.

Applicants may request a hearing date that is later than the statutory deadline (65 days) by emailing a written request at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled hearing. If the request is not received 48 hours prior to the hearing, the Applicant must appear in person to request the hearing be continued to a future date.

Requests for hearing continuances are not guaranteed.