

PUBLIC HEARING PROTOCOL

Any person who plans to testify at a Public Hearing is required to sign the sign-up sheet located at the front of the room.

If a person does not wish to speak, but wishes to show support for, or opposition to, a project that person may still sign the sheet. When a name is called, that person must state that they are in support or opposition of the application, but do not wish to speak.

The person may also state that someone else is speaking on their behalf.

Applicants and applicant's representatives are allowed 10 minutes to present their case before decision-makers.

Other persons who speak in favor of the application will receive 3-minutes of non-repetitive testimony. Persons in opposition are allowed a group representative or attorney to testify for 10 minutes.

All others who are not in favor of the project will have 3-minutes of non-repetitive testimony.

After your testimony has concluded, the decision-makers may have questions regarding the testimony given.

At the conclusion of the public hearing, the applicant or the applicant's representative will be allowed to speak for 5-minutes of rebuttal to any testimony presented before the decision-making body.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY GUIDELINES

Focus on the Facts

It is the applicants', representative, and/or publics' responsibility to persuade the decision-makers to vote or decide in favor of your request. It will not help your cause to anger, alienate or antagonize the decision-makers that are listening to your presentation.

Complaints are usually a poor use of time and do not aid in a timely and fair decision making process.

Know the Law and Be Well Informed

Officials are not likely to make decisions in violation of county or state codes. No amount of passion, persuasion, or pleading will accomplish this task.

Research the subject/application request and past decisions, before you plan your testimony.

The applicant or member of the public may request a copy of the staff report, public/agency response letters, and other pertinent information regarding the subject application.

Discuss the Application with the Planning and Zoning Administrator

The P&Z Administrator is available by appointment to discuss the application in advance of the hearing.

State your Request Clearly

The decision-makers want to know the details of what they are asked to approve. Be careful to include ALL information regarding your request.

Speak to the Point

The hearing body is grateful when the testimony is pertinent, well organized and directly relates to the application request.

One person may speak for several members of the public with the same opinion. Provide the decision makers or P&Z Administrator with a list of names and addresses of all persons with the same opinion(s).

Long stories, personal philosophy, and what Aunt Sophie said at dinner last night (hear-say) are not decision making facts.

Be Confident

Testimony is not required to be given by a professional engineer, developer or planner. All non-repetitive, public testimony is welcomed at the Public Hearing.

Be Reasonable

The decision makers must consider all pertinent and factual points of view, interests, proposals, and facts. The decision makers will seek the best course for serving the overall public good.

It is the speakers' obligation to present the speakers' interests. However, remember that there is always other legitimate competition. Be prepared to compromise, if necessary.

Testimony May Be Submitted To the City in Writing

At most hearings, all testimony is reviewed by the decision making body with assistance from staff. If written testimony is specific, to the point and concise, it will be given as much attention as oral testimony, especially if the decision-makers have more time to review your written comments.

By necessity, oral testimony has time limits so that more people can speak. Written testimony has no length limitations. It may be effective to summarize your testimony orally in 3 to 5 minutes and then submit the details in writing.