

Public Hearing Procedures



WATERTOWN PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Original Effective Date: May 7, 1975
Revisions to: February 3, 2010

ARTICLE IX

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Section 1 The Commission may hold public hearings in addition to required hearings when the Commission determines such hearings are in the public interest.

Section 2 All public hearings prescribed by law shall be held in accordance to the requirements set forth in C.G.S. 8-124 (Zoning) and C.G.S. 8-126 (Planning).

Section 3 The Recording Secretary shall take evidence. Evidence shall be recorded by a sound-recording device. Public hearing minutes shall be prepared in accordance with the provisions of Article VII Section 7. Proceedings of public hearings shall be incorporated into the Minutes Book of the Commission to be a permanent part of the record, and a copy shall be filed in the Town Clerk's office.¹

Section 4 The Chairman of the Commission shall preside at public hearings or if absent the Vice Chairman shall preside. In the absence of all elected Commission officials the longest serving member of the Commission shall preside.²

Section 5 The Secretary shall read the legal advertisements, dates, and newspapers in which advertisements appeared.³

Section 6 The Chairman shall describe the method of conduct of public hearings consistent with these By-Laws and shall read aloud at the commencement of public hearings, "The Planning and Zoning Commission has established Rules for the conduct of public hearings. Copies of these Rules are at the doorway to this room. While decisions are pending, you may communicate with Commissioners on the merits of an application only when at a Commission meeting. Please speak with Commission staff when the Commission is not in session. Documents pertaining to an application are required to be recorded for receipt in the Planning and Zoning office in sufficient time for staff to review documents and prepare comments."⁴

Section 7 The Chairman shall inform the hearing of the commencement of each hearing Phase.

Phase 1 **APPLICANT AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES**

The Chairman shall recognize the applicant. The applicant shall introduce themselves and their representatives, and then shall briefly summarize the application followed by a full presentation.

¹ As Amended May 19, 2004, March 5, 2008 and February 1, 2009

² As Amended May 19, 2004 and March 5, 2008

³ As Amended May 19, 2004

⁴ As Amended May 19, 2004 and May 14, 2008

The public, Commission members, and staff shall not comment or ask questions during this Phase of the public hearing.

- Phase 2 COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF
Commission members and staff may ask questions to all except the public for the sole purpose of clarifying the presentation. Commission members and staff should make every effort to refrain from stating their opinions or positions during this Phase of the hearing. The applicant and their representatives may answer questions from Commission members and staff. The public may not ask questions or comment during this Phase of the hearing.
- Phase 3 PUBLIC
The Chairman shall call for statements from the public. Only the person from the public recognized by the Chairman to be at the hearing table may comment and ask questions. The Chairman may request a speaker to expeditiously conclude their comments. The Commission may establish speaking time limits. All members of the public shall be given an opportunity to speak before anyone is recognized by the Chairman to speak again.
- Phase 4 APPLICANT AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES
The Chairman shall call for statements from the applicant and their representatives. The public, Commission members, and staff may not comment or ask questions.
- Phase 5 COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF
The Chairman shall call for statements and questions from Commission members and staff. The public, applicant, and their representatives may not comment or ask questions. Commission members may ask questions directed to the applicant and their representatives, staff, and to those who made public comment.
- Phase 6 PUBLIC
The Chairman shall call for final statements from the public. The public shall not ask questions during this Phase of the hearing. Statements are expected to be less than five (5) minutes, but are not limited to five (5) minutes. The Chairman may request a speaker to expeditiously conclude their comments. The Commission may establish speaking time limits. Commission members, staff, the applicant, and their representatives may not comment or ask questions.

Phase 7 APPLICANT AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES

The Chairman shall call for final statements from the applicant and their representatives. The public, Commission members, and staff may not comment or ask questions.

When a public hearing is not initiated by an applicant, reference to “applicant and their representatives” shall be substituted by “spokesman approved by the Commission”.⁵

Section 8 All questions and comments must be directed through the Chair after being properly recognized by the presiding officer.

Section 9 All persons recognized shall approach the hearing table in order to facilitate proper recording of comments. Before commenting in the matter before the hearing each person shall give their name and address.⁶

Section 10 The presiding officer shall assure an orderly hearing and shall take the necessary steps to maintain order and decorum at all times. In the event the hearing becomes unruly and unmanageable the presiding officer has authority to act in accordance with Section 1-232 of the Connecticut General Statutes to restore order by clearing the room, except for the media, and then readmitting those not responsible for the disturbance. Commission members may adjourn the hearing to another time or place.⁷

Section 11 The Chairman may limit a presentation when comments or questions are derogatory, repetitive, not on the subject matter of the public hearing, or not helpful to the Commission understanding an application.⁸

⁵ As Amended May 19, 2004

⁶ As Amended May 19, 2004

⁷ As Amended July 2, 1986 and May 19, 2004

⁸ As Amended May 14, 2008