

PUBLIC HEARING INFORMATION GUIDE

OVERVIEW

The Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) and Inland Wetlands Agency (IWA) routinely hold public hearings to obtain community input on proposed projects; however, not all applications require a public hearing. Any questions regarding whether a public hearing will be held on an application should be directed to the Department of Planning and Development at PlanZoneDept@MansfieldCT.org.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

You can receive notice of upcoming public hearings in several ways:

- Public hearing notices will be posted at least 10 days in advance of a hearing at <http://www.mansfieldct.gov/1713/Legal-Notices>
- If you are an abutting property owner, you will receive notice of the hearing from the applicant. Due to the ongoing pandemic, applicants may presently provide such notice via email (if the email addresses of abutters are known), via mail, or via a sign posted on the property. Once the Governor's authorization for alternative notice procedures has expired, applicants will return to providing notice via certified mail.
- Monitoring meeting agendas.
 - You can sign up to receive notice when new agendas are posted for any of the Town's many committees at <http://www.mansfieldct.gov/AgendaCenter>, using the "Notify Me" tool in the upper right corner. Agendas for PZC and IWA meetings are typically posted on the Friday before regularly scheduled meetings.
 - Agendas and meeting materials are also available at: <https://mansfield.civicweb.net/Portal/>. Agendas for PZC and IWA meetings are typically posted on the Friday before regularly scheduled meetings.

PROVIDING COMMENTS THROUGH THE PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS

Once a public hearing has been scheduled, there are two ways that you can participate: submission of written testimony and speaking during the public hearing.

Submission of Written Testimony

You can submit comments on the application to the Department of Planning and Development via email to PlanZoneDept@MansfieldCT.org. If you prefer to provide a paper copy, you may drop off comments at Town Hall using the Drop Box by the Collectors office or mail comments to:

Planning and Zoning Commission (or Inland Wetlands Agency)
c/o Department of Planning and Development
4 South Eagleville Road
Mansfield, CT 06268-2599

- When submitting comments, please be sure to reference the application number and project name or location.
- All comments on an application **must be received prior to the close of the public hearing** to be considered.
- To give the Commission/Agency time to review your comments in advance of the hearing, we recommend submitting them by 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday prior to the public hearing. However, any communications received prior to the closure of the hearing will be provided to the Commission for their consideration.

Oral presentation

You may choose to address the Commission directly as part of the public hearing. Instructions for speaking at the hearing are provided below. If you have also submitted written testimony, you are encouraged to summarize your testimony and not read it verbatim.

PARTICIPATING IN A PUBLIC HEARING

Virtual Meeting Instructions

- Instructions on how to log into the public hearing will be provided on the meeting agenda.
 - The Commission/Agency uses the GoToMeeting platform; additional information on how to use GoToMeeting is provided in their [quick start guide](#).
 - If you have any questions about the platform or would like to do a dry run to make sure you are ready, please email PlanZoneDept@MansfieldCT.org in advance of the hearing and we will schedule a time to walk you through the process.
 - If you are experiencing difficulties during the hearing itself, please call 860.429.3330 and a staff member will assist you.
- When logging into the meeting, please:
 - Edit your screen name to be your first and last name. This helps staff identify and keep track of who is in the meeting.
 - You may be asked to identify the item on which you wish to speak and whether you are speaking in support or opposition.
 - Please keep your camera turned off and your microphone muted until you are called upon.
- If you are calling in to the meeting, you will be asked to identify yourself and the item on which you wish to speak. After you have identified yourself, please mute your microphone until called upon.

Order of Presentations/Speakers

- **Applicant.** Public hearings will generally start with a presentation from the applicant, followed by questions from the Commission/Agency.
- **Staff/Consultants.** Staff may also make a brief presentation regarding issues for Commission/Agency consideration. If the Commission/Agency has retained outside

consultants to assist in review of the application, they will also be called upon to make a presentation.

- **Public Comment.** Pursuant to the By-Laws adopted by the PZC and IWA, public comment is to be taken in the following order unless reversed at the discretion of the Commission/Agency:
 - Proponents
 - Opponents
 - Questions/Seeking Information

For applications where a significant number of speakers are anticipated, the Commission/Agency may use a sign-up sheet to determine speaking order. If a sign-up sheet will be used, a link will be provided on the agenda to allow speakers to register in advance of the meeting. While encouraged, use of the advance registration form is not required. Any person present during the hearing may speak when called upon.

Guidelines for the Public Hearing

- The purpose of a public hearing is to receive relevant information about a proposed application from the public.
- Order and decorum shall be maintained at all times during the hearing
- The Commission/Agency reserves the right to adjourn the hearing to another date and time if the discussion becomes unruly and unmanageable.
- Given the virtual format, we ask that everyone bear with us if we encounter any glitches. If we are unable to overcome technical issues and/or the Commission/Agency is having difficulty understanding information presented in this format, the hearing will be continued to another meeting.

When Addressing the Commission

- State your name and address, and any party, group or organization you represent, if any, for the record before beginning your comments
- Limit your comments to the subject of the public hearing
- Avoid repetition where possible
- Summarize reports and letters that are submitted to the Commission rather than reading them aloud as all written information is copied and distributed to members
- Direct all questions and comments to the Chair
- Do not attempt to engage in dialogue with members of the Commission, staff, or any other parties to the hearing.
- Speak clearly to ensure your comments are audible to members of the public watching from home and are recorded
- Commission members may ask questions of anyone providing testimony, but will not discuss the relative merits of the application until the hearing is closed.
- Failure to abide by these policies and procedures may result in a muting of your microphone or in dismissal from the hearing.