



Township of
Readington
New Jersey

Procedures for Planning and Zoning Board Meetings*

The Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment are quasi-judicial bodies, meaning that they operate similar to, but not as strictly as, a court of law. Thus, a hearing is similar to a court proceeding in that the Chair runs the proceedings, and the Board will vote on a final decision to approve or deny. The Boards and Board Members have the legal obligation to follow the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq., and all discussions, presentations of evidence, questions, and comments with regard to a pending application must be done on the record at a public hearing.

The order of items discussed at the Planning Board and Zoning Board meetings will follow the meeting agendas. Agendas and minutes can be found on the Township website:

Planning Board - <https://readingtontwpnj.gov/pb-agendas-minutes>

Board of Adjustment - <https://readingtontwpnj.gov/boa-agendas-minutes>

Agendas are also posted on the bulletin board in the lobby of the municipal building.

The Planning Board and Zoning Board observe a 10:00 p.m. time limit where no new applications or new testimony will be started after 10:00 p.m.

If an application is not completed during a meeting, a continuation date will be announced by the Board Attorney at the meeting, usually without a requirement of the applicant to provide further notice to the public.

Individuals can also seek information about the status of an application or its hearing by contacting the secretary for the Planning and Zoning Boards at 908-534-4067 or planning@readingtontwp-nj.org.

During a Public Hearing at a Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustment Meeting

There are certain times during the procedure of a meeting when the public may either ask questions or make comments.

- ❖ An application hearing begins when the Chair calls an application. At that time, the applicant will come forward, often represented by an attorney, and will introduce himself/herself. The applicant/attorney will give an overview of the application (also called a proposal) and call their first witness to provide testimony. If there are review letters from the Board's Planner, Engineer, and/or other professional, these may be read or reviewed. Any witnesses for the applicant or the municipality giving testimony must state their name and occupation, be sworn in, and present their credentials to the Board for acceptance before providing testimony.

- ❖ After the Board and its professional staff have completed asking questions of a particular witness the Chair will open the meeting to the public, limited at this time to ***questions only, and only of that witness***. Each witness is an expert who is only able to testify in her/his field of expertise.
 - **This is a time for questions only and not for comments.**
 - If you have a question, please raise your hand. When the Chair acknowledges you, come to the podium to speak into the microphone.
 - If the person(s) from the public is represented by an attorney, she/he must speak through the attorney.
 - Before asking your question, state your name (please also spell your name) and address for the record and direct your questions to the witness.
 - To ensure an orderly meeting and allow adequate time for all members of the public to be heard, the Chair may limit repetitive comments or what may be considered irrelevant testimony and may limit the time or number of questions from any one citizen.
- ❖ When the public has had adequate opportunity for questions, the applicant/attorney will then call the next witness and the above procedures will be repeated. When all witnesses have been presented and the testimony is complete, the Board and its professionals will ask any final questions.
- ❖ After the Board and its professionals have finished questioning the applicant, and before the Board takes action on the application, the Chair will open the meeting to the public for comments.
- ❖ This is the time to comment on the proposal. The same procedure as described above for public questions is followed and all members of the public who wish to make a comment will then be sworn under oath by the Board Attorney.
- ❖ The applicant/attorney has the right to cross examine any members of the public who may make comments. Written statements or letters from individuals who are not present, petitions or speaking on anyone's behalf are not allowable as per N.J.S.A. 40:55D-10.D. Written statements from the public cannot be accepted as they cannot be cross-examined.
- ❖ The Chair will then ask the Board to deliberate and act on the application.

Thank you for participating!

Public participation in meetings will assist the Boards in making their decisions. We hope that this public hearing and your participation in it will be a rewarding experience for you. We thank you for participating in this process!

*These guidelines are for the purpose of assisting interested parties in understanding and participating in the municipal land use process. Each application is unique and deviations from the outline may necessarily occur.