

**Planning Board Public Hearing Guidelines**  
**City of Salem**  
*March 23, 2016*

**Introduction and Context**

Welcome to this public hearing for the City of Salem Planning Board. The Planning Board is composed of nine volunteer citizens who are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council for five-year terms without compensation. The Planning Board reviews proposed projects that require its approval, such as special permits, site plan, and subdivisions, and operates within statutory constraints. The Planning Board has regular meetings on the first and third Thursday of the month and holds special meetings as needed, depending on the workload. All the meetings are open to the public and the Planning Board encourages public attendance and participation.

**Notification:** Notification of the Planning Board's public hearings will be given in accordance with statutory requirements and the City's public notice requirements.

**Arrival:** Copies of these Guidelines will be available at the beginning of each Planning Board meeting. There will be opportunities to speak at some time during the course of the hearing, which may last more than one meeting.

**Responsibility of Chair:** The Chair will introduce the project and describe the public hearing format and guidelines, as stated below.

**Public Hearing Format**

- The purpose of a public hearing is to allow the public to ask questions and to comment on the proposed development. It brings to the Planning Board all possible germane facts, information, and opinions, which may be of assistance to the Planning Board is making a decision.
- The project proponent will present his/her proposal, followed by questions and comments from Planning Board members. Then the Chair will open the floor up to questions and comments from the audience.
- Planning Board members are here to listen and will not engage in any dialog with members of the public once the public hearing is opened, except however to answer procedural questions or ask for clarification if comments or questions are unclear.
- When people are speaking, others should give them their courteous attention. Regardless of whether one agrees or disagrees with their views, one should refrain from responding with applause or booing. Such responses waste valuable time, they fail to add weight to comments, and they interfere with the orderly conduct of the meeting. Please remember that Planning Board members are local residents too, and they deserve your consideration as volunteers and neighbors.

- It is the objective of Planning Board to conclude all public hearings by 10:00 p.m., and, therefore, an attempt is made to keep each public hearing to a specified time limit.

### **Public Comment Guidelines**

- The Chair will call on audience members to stand and speak from their seat.
- The time limit for questions and comments is three (3) minutes or at the discretion of the Chair. Personal or legal representatives may speak on another person's behalf; however, the time limit is the same without respect to the number of people he or she may be representing.
- If public comment will be aided by visual and/or an audio recording, such visual aid and/or audio recording shall be submitted to the Department of Planning and Community Development by noon on the day of the meeting. Said materials are subject to the 3 minute time limit at the discretion of the Chair and will be reviewed by staff prior to the meeting for appropriateness and relevance to the subject of the application under review.
- Everyone will be given an opportunity to speak before anyone may speak for a second time.
- Each person speaking shall state his or her name and address. If the speaker is a personal or legal representative, he or she should state the name and address of the person or persons that he or she is representing.
- All comments shall be addressed to the Planning Board Chair and must be connected to the issue at hand.
- People should avoid repeating what others have said. They should simply indicate their agreement and move on to other points.
- Once the Planning Board votes to close the public hearing, no further comments from the audience will be taken. The Planning Board will discuss and vote on the project in an open meeting.

**Written Comments:** Comments may always be submitted in writing. There is no limit on the length of written comments. As such, written comments provide an additional opportunity to communicate views in depth. Written comments may be submitted even if someone has commented at the hearing. Written comments must be submitted to the Department of Planning and Community Development prior to the next public hearing in order to be considered by the Planning Board.