

BISMARCK PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

GUIDE TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Planning and Zoning Commission welcomes and values public input during its meetings. The following procedures for public comment are to ensure that all individuals have a fair opportunity to be heard while maintaining an orderly, transparent, and efficient meeting environment. There are two opportunities available:

Public Hearings

All public hearing items are shown on the regular agenda, which is when comments on these items should be given.

1. **Introduction.** The Chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission introduces the item on the agenda and asks staff to present a report.
2. **Staff Report:** A planner presents the staff report. The presentation will be an overview of the written staff report included in the agenda packet with a visual presentation of materials.
3. **Commission Questions.** Commissioners may ask staff questions, but they will not discuss the request or share an opinion prior to obtaining input from the public.
4. **Open Public Hearing.** The Chair will then open the public hearing on the request and ask if anyone would like to speak to the commission.
5. **Applicant Statement.** The applicant is traditionally given the courtesy to present their proposal or any additional information first.
6. **Public Statements.** The hearing is then opened to the public to voice their support, opposition, or give any comments regarding the item. This is the opportunity to approach the podium.
7. **Close Hearing.** The Chair closes the hearing for the item once all interested people have spoken, and no more public comments are allowed.
8. **Commission Discussion.** Commissioners discuss the proposal. They may ask staff or the applicant questions or for clarification of items stated during the public hearing.
9. **Commission Action.** The Planning and Zoning Commission makes its decision on that item.

Other Public Comments

Any comments addressing an item on the current agenda, other than a public hearing, or an agenda item from the preceding meeting.

1. **Public Comment.** General public comments are received toward the beginning of the meeting.
2. **Time Limits.** Each person may comment for five minutes, unless extended by the Chair. An individual may not yield their time to another. The total comment period is limited to 30 minutes, unless extended by the Chair.

General Instructions

The following guidance applies to both public hearings and other public comments:

- Write your first and last name and address on the sign-in sheet at the podium.
- Adjust the microphone, if necessary, state your name, then provide comments. Traditionally, comments are addressed to the Chair and Planning and Zoning Commission.
- Comments may not be defamatory, abusive, harassing, or unlawful; include information that is exempt or confidential under North Dakota open records law; or interfere with the orderly conduct of the meeting.
- Commenters may only address the Commission, not staff, applicants, or other meeting attendees. Commissioners may question any person. The Chair may ask speakers to limit their time, not repeat previous testimony, and speak only once.
- Written materials may be distributed to the Commissioners or displayed visually on screens. Staff are available to assist.
- Reasonable accommodations will be made upon request, pursuant to the City's Title VI policy.