

BISMARCK PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING PROCEDURE AND PROTOCOL

All public hearings before the Bismarck Planning and Zoning Commission will follow the same basic format. This outline has been prepared to help you understand the procedure and protocol.

1. The Chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission will introduce the item on the agenda and ask staff to present the staff report.
2. The Planner assigned to the file will present the staff report on the item. The presentation will be an overview of the written staff report included in the agenda packet, which is posted on the City's website by the end of the day on the Friday before the meeting.
3. The members of the Planning and Zoning Commission may ask staff questions about the request itself or staff's recommendation, but they will not discuss the request prior to obtaining input from the public.
4. The Chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission will then open the public hearing on the request and ask if anyone would like to speak to the Commission.
5. The applicant or his or her designated agent is usually given the courtesy of speaking first to outline the proposal and/or clarify any information presented by staff. The applicant may speak at this time or wait until others have spoken.
6. The public hearing is then opened to the public to voice their support, opposition or to ask questions about the proposal. Please write your name and address on the sign-in sheet, step up to the podium, speak clearly, state both your first and last names and your address, then your comments. Speaking over the microphone rather than directly into it will provide the best audio quality. Also, please avoid tapping or banging the podium, as the microphone amplifies the sound. Your comments as well as any materials distributed to the Planning and Zoning Commissioners at this time will be made part of the public record. If you would prefer to provide written materials to staff at the beginning of the meeting, we will distribute the materials to the Commission for you.
7. Please be respectful of the Planning and Zoning Commissioners, staff and others speaking on the request. Personal attacks against the applicant or others, clapping/cheering or booing speakers is not acceptable. Staff and the applicant will only respond to questions from the Planning and Zoning Commissioners, not questions directly from those speaking at the public hearing.
8. Everyone who wishes to speak will be given a chance to speak; however, at larger public hearings, the Chair may ask speakers to limit their time at the podium to five minutes, not repeat previous testimony/comments and only speak once. Members of the Planning and Zoning Commission may ask questions of those speaking, but may also listen and deliberate after the hearing is closed.
9. After everyone in the audience wishing to speak has given his or her comments, the Chair will close the public hearing portion for the agenda item. No additional comments from the public are allowed after the hearing has been closed. At this point, the Chair will ask staff if they have any additional information or final comments.
10. The Planning and Zoning Commissioners will then discuss the proposal. They may ask staff or the applicant additional questions or for clarification of items stated during the public hearing. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Commission will make its recommendation or decision.