



Public Hearings

Giving a voice to the public...

You are probably reading this because one of our Boards—the Planning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, or the Board of Historic Review—is holding a public hearing on a topic of interest to you. The purpose of a public hearing is to let the applicant and City staff members explain the request to the Board, and then to let attendees comment on the request. Input from the public is a very important part of the Board’s decision. We hope that this fact sheet will explain some things to you about how the meeting will work.



The flow of a public hearing

1. The Board chair will explain some ground rules for the public hearing.
 2. A City staff member will explain the request to the Board and answer any technical questions about it.
 3. For requests that involve an applicant, the applicant will present information about the request to the Board. Usually this presentation will be limited to about 10 minutes, but no more than 15 minutes.
 4. The Board chair will hear from members of the public about the request. Usually, the chair will ask to hear from those in favor of the request first, followed by those against. Those who are not necessarily for or against the request may speak at any point. Every speaker is limited to 3 minutes, unless representing a group (like a neighborhood association), in which case the representative may speak for 10 minutes. Other members of the group are asked to refrain from speaking.
 5. The applicant will have a few minutes to respond to the public comments.
 6. At any time during this process, the Board may ask staff or the applicant questions about the proposal. These questions will not affect the time allowed for the applicant to speak.
 7. The Board will close the public comment period and will deliberate on the request. In most cases, the Board will then decide on whether to approve the request, approve the request with conditions, or not approve the request on the spot. Occasionally, requests are deferred to another meeting for consideration.
- In cases that are before the Planning Commission, the Planning Commission will not have the final decision on the request; rather, the Planning Commission will simply be recommending to City Council whether it thinks that City Council should approve or not approve the request.

Some ground rules

- **Silence electronic devices before the meeting begins.** Also, please avoid having side conversations during the meeting, if possible, so that everyone can hear the speaker.
- **Sign in at the front desk if you would like to speak on a particular item.** The chair will call on those who have signed up to speak first. You can always decide not to speak if your questions are answered.
- **Speak only when called to the podium, not from your seat.** When you arrive at the podium, say your name and address for the record.
- **Please be courteous.** Others who are here may have differing opinions from you—please be respectful of them. Direct your comments and questions to the Board, not the applicant or other members of the public in attendance.
- **Try to keep your comments to the subject matter at hand.** If certain topics are totally off-limits for one reason or another, the Board chair will explain that the Board cannot take them into consideration.
- **The Board's staff will give you a cue when your time to speak is about to end.** When your time limit has been reached, please wrap up your comments right away.

Special circumstances

The City of Rock Hill is committed to assuring accessibility, with reasonable accommodations, of city services, facilities, employment and programs for all individuals, in compliance with federal law.

Please let staff know if you need assistance.

Did you know?

Our Board members are volunteers.

They serve without pay. They serve because they live in Rock Hill and care about this community. This is their way to give back and to help shape the community they love.

Their work is not easy. They are charged with sorting through and weighing a lot of information to reach a decision about every issue that comes before them.

They do their best to make sure that their processes are fair to all involved and that the decisions they make are in the best interest of the community as a whole.

