

PLANNING BOARD RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR REMOTE ACCESS MEETINGS

Updated March 20, 2020

PURPOSE: The purpose for remote access meetings is to allow the conduct of Planning Board meetings during the state of emergency declared by Governor Mills.

AUTHORITY: In accordance with Public Law Chapter 617 adopted as emergency legislation by the Maine State Legislature on March 17, 2020 and signed into effect by Governor Mills, 1 MRSA § 403-A permits public proceedings through remote access during the declaration of state of emergency due to COVID-19.

Westbrook Planning Board meetings conducted in accordance with these provisions shall be subject to the following Rules of Procedure.

PLATFORM. The Planning Board shall utilize “Zoom” as its platform for remote participation by both the Board and the public. Recordings of the meetings shall be posted to the City website. Instructions for use of the platform shall be included on the meeting agenda and on the City’s website.

MEETING NOTICE. Notice of these public meetings will be posted to the City website and the City’s Facebook page.

FACILITATOR. To coordinate these public meetings in the online environment, the City Planner or a member of the Planning and Code Enforcement Department shall be the designated facilitator for all Planning Board meetings held in accordance with these provisions. The facilitator shall read all items into the record, and Board members shall provide motions. The Chair will run the meeting.

PLANNING BOARD/ADMINISTRATION PARTICIPATION. Westbrook Planning Board and staff of the City Planning & Code Enforcement Office participating in the public meeting will participate through the Zoom platform. Board Members are encouraged to review the agenda packet beforehand and to request any additional documentation or clarification from the staff prior to the meeting, as staff members may not be immediately able to answer questions during the meeting and such information needs to be posted to the City website for public viewing.

ROLL CALL VOTE. In accordance with the provisions outlined with 1 MRSA § 403-A, all Planning Board votes taken during the public meeting shall be taken by roll call vote. This includes attendance, all motions, and adjournments.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/PUBLIC HEARING. Members of the public may be afforded the opportunity to view the meetings live online or may listen by phone, to the extent this function can be made available. Due to the constraints of the virtual environment, the public comment portion of Planning Board meetings, where live comments must be considered for inclusion in the public record, the following procedures shall apply:

- Application files will be posted online with all public comments that have been received to date so that people can receive them that way.
- Applicants’ written presentations will be provided online for viewing prior to the Meeting.

- Written comments submitted prior to the meeting for inclusion in the record must be submitted to the City Planning Office (by email or Mail) and must be received by Noon of the Friday before the scheduled Planning Board Meeting to guarantee inclusion in the record. Such comments will be read by the meeting facilitator(s) and must be limited to 3 minutes in length. Comments submitted not meeting the deadline stated above, may be read into the record, recognizing that the Staff cannot guarantee their inclusion as packets must be assembled in advance of a meeting.
- Live comments may be submitted through the Zoom platform during the designated public hearing time by attendees that register through Zoom and will not be considered once the Board moves to deliberations, unless allowed by the Chair.
 - Live written comments must be submitted through the Zoom platform's Question & Answer (Q&A) function and must be limited to 3 minutes in length. Comments will be read by the meeting facilitator(s).
 - Comments specific to an application can be submitted at any time during the Public Hearing portion of the item.
 - Phone comments must be submitted through the Zoom platform and must be limited to 3 minutes in length.
 - Participants on landlines or non-smart phones, will only have the ability to listen to the meeting live. In this instance, if you would like to provide comments on an application, we highly suggest submission of those comments in advance of the meeting.

ADJUSTMENTS TO RULES. The City Planner or their designee shall adjust these Rules as may be necessary in accordance with State and local provisions and shall present the adjusted Rules to Planning Board for confirmation at the next Planning Board meeting.