

Your guide to public hearings

This guide explains what public hearings are and how you can participate at City Planning Commission (CPC), Zoning Board of Adjustment (BOA), and Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) meetings.



What is a public hearing?

A public hearing is a meeting where members of the public may speak about an application request before a specific committee makes a decision about it. Public hearings are required by law for some application types and must follow the rules set forth in state statute and city ordinance.

Who can participate?

Anyone can sign up to speak at a public hearing. You don't need to have a direct connection to the application to participate.

What happens at a public hearing?

The chair of the committee calls the meeting to order, and the public hearing items are organized into a **consent agenda** and a **discussion agenda**. The consent agenda is limited to applications without opposition or questions.

If you disagree with a consent item and want to state your concerns, you must speak up when the chair asks if anybody would like to speak against staff's recommendation. This moves the item from the consent agenda to the discussion agenda.

The consent agenda is considered first. Items on consent are bundled together and do not typically include presentations by staff or the applicants. The chair will open one public hearing, which the public may speak during. After the chair closes the public hearing, the committee will act on all the consent items with a single vote. The committee typically votes to approve items on consent.

The discussion agenda is considered next. Items on discussion are considered one at a time. Typically, each item on discussion includes:

- A presentation by staff
- Optional presentation by the applicant
- Public comment (this is your opportunity to speak to the committee)
- Committee discussion and vote

How can you give public comments?

- Submit written comments.
- Speak at the public hearing.

You may send comments to the assigned planner by email or mail before the public hearing. The planner's contact information is available on the agenda, staff report, and public notice for the application. Written comments received before the publication of the meeting agenda are included in the staff report. Comments received after this are shared with the committee members at the public hearing.

A speaker sign-up sheet is provided at the meeting. Please arrive before the meeting begins to sign up with the clerk. You have one opportunity to speak during the public hearing. You generally have **two minutes** to speak.

Written comments submitted to the planner and testimony spoken at the public hearing will be part of the **public record**. Only share what you are comfortable making public. Comments provided over the phone or after the public hearing cannot be included in the public record and will not be forwarded to the committee.

Do public comments matter?

Yes! Public comments can influence the committee's decision about an application. Your comments are most helpful when they relate to the application's required **findings**.

What are findings?

Findings are the written explanations of the legal criteria required to approve an application. "The application is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan" is a common finding. Each application type has different required findings. You can learn about which findings are required in the City's Code of Ordinances or in the application's staff report. All required findings must be met to approve an application.

When are public hearings required?

Public hearings are required by law for some land use and preservation applications. In general, applications that have a greater degree of discretion or potential community impact require public hearings. Applications with less discretion or potential impact on the public are typically reviewed administratively by staff.

Public hearings help increase public awareness about an application and give the public an opportunity to speak about how it may affect their community. The facts shared during a public hearing help to inform the committee before they vote on the request.

When and where are public hearings held?

Public hearings are held during committee meetings. Details about upcoming public hearings are included in meeting agendas, public notices, and on the City website. Visit

www.minneapolis.gov/government/city-council/meetings/public-notices/

or scan this QR code:



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Where can you find specific project details?

Each application has a staff report that includes:

- Background information
- Application materials
- Staff's analysis and recommendation
- Written comments received before the publication of the meeting agenda

Staff reports are linked within meeting agendas. Agendas are posted a few days before the meeting. If you have questions, contact the assigned planner. The planner's phone number and email address are included in the public hearing notice, meeting agenda, and staff report.

What happens after a public hearing?

After the public hearing closes, the committee considers the facts presented and votes to:

- Approve
- Continue
- Deny
- Recommend to Council

If the committee approves or denies an item, this action is typically final. However, **the action is subject to appeal**. Anyone may file an appeal within 10 calendar days of the committee's decision. The Business, Housing and Zoning (BHZ) Committee of the City Council will hold a public hearing to consider the appeal.

If the committee continues an item, **it will be considered again at a future meeting**. This allows the applicant or staff to respond to new information that is relevant to the request. Continuances are rare and do not typically allow for substantial changes to an application.

For most application types, the committee makes the final action. If the committee is **not** the final decision-making authority for the item, the committee will conduct the required public hearing and recommend an action to BHZ to approve or deny it. This applies to rezonings, comprehensive plan amendments, and historic designations. BHZ does not hold additional public hearings for these items.

Where can you learn more about the CPC, BOA, and HPC?

Visit the independent bodies webpage at www.lims.minneapolis.gov/IndependentBodiesMenu or scan the QR codes below:



CPC



BOA



HPC

For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact 311 at 612-673-3000.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000.

Para asistencia 612-673-2700

Rau kev pab 612-673-2800

Hadii aad Caawimaad u baahantahay
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