

TOWN OF RICHMOND

Public Hearing Procedures, Protocols and Etiquette

The Public Hearing Process:

The public hearing is the only open record hearing for a land use application at the township level and is the public's opportunity to speak in favor or against an application. The purpose of the 'open record hearing' is for the Town Board to gather factual information to assist them in formulating their recommendations. The hearing is not a debate or a question and answer session with the audience.

The Public Hearing:

The Chairperson will introduce the item on the agenda. Following the applicant's presentation to the Town Board and discussion by Town Board members, the Chair will 'open' the Public Hearing.

- 1. The Chair will request input from proponents (people in favor of the application).** Please stand, face the Board and state your name and address for the record before stating your support. Testimony is directed to the Board, not to the applicant. Questions may be directed to the applicant only with Chair approval.
- 2. The Chair will request input from opponents (people not in favor of the application).** Please stand, face the Board and state your name and address for the record before stating your objections. Testimony is directed to the Board, not to the applicant. Questions may be directed to the applicant only with Chair approval.
- 3. The Chair will ask the public for any clarification of statements or questions.** Also, Board members may ask questions of proponents and opponents. Please stand, face the Board and state your name and address for the record before stating your testimony.
- 4. The Chair will "close" the public hearing.**
- 5. The Chair will allow for Town Board discussion only.** Once deliberation has ended the Chair will ask for a motion for recommendation with findings of fact and/or conditions.

Hearing Tips, Protocols and Etiquette:

Please stand, face the Town Board, speak clearly and state your name and address for the record.

Speak only when recognized by the Chairperson.

Focus your testimony on the matter at hand, state only the relevant facts and opinions.

Avoid repetitive testimony. If another witness has made similar points, please make note of it in the record and state that you concur with the previous speaker.

Proponents and opponents of the application are limited to five (5) minutes per speaker per item. When large groups are present, the Chair may reduce the time per speaker (usually to three minutes each).

Speaking time may not be deferred to another witness.

Do not speak to the Board unless you are standing and facing the Board.

Exhibits (photographs, letters, maps) become part of the permanent record and cannot be returned.

The Board's hearings are conducted in a courtroom-like environment and audience conduct shall be in accordance with courtroom etiquette. Clapping, cheering, speaking out of order or disorderly conduct are not appropriate. Pagers and cellular phones should be turned off or placed on vibrate as to not disturb the hearing.