

**Public Hearing Procedures**

The following procedures shall be followed with regard to all public hearings conducted by and before the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC):

Section 1. Public Notice

- a. If a public hearing is required by law or ordinance, the planning commission and, when applicable, the Board of County Commissioners shall hold at least one public hearing in which interested persons shall have an opportunity to be heard. At least fifteen (15) days prior to the hearing, notice of the time and place and a summary of the proposal shall be published in the county's official newspaper. Notice of public hearing should only be published when an application is complete in a manner sufficient to address the requirements established by ordinance and application forms.
- b. In the case of annexations, conditional use permits, site-specific rezones, subdivisions, and variances, notice shall also be provided to property owners within the land being considered; those record owners of lands within three hundred feet (300') of the external boundaries of the land being considered; and, optionally, within any additional areas that may be substantially impacted by the proposal as determined by the Planning and Zoning Administrator. Contents of the mailed notice must contain the information required by law and when practical should include information guided by this policy such as requirements of testimony, default time limits (or issue-specific time limits, if known), timing for allowing written submissions, and other significant conditions or restrictions on testifying.
- c. When mailed notices would be required to be sent to two hundred (200) or more property owners, a notice of public hearing, at least 2" x 4" in size, may be published in the county's official newspaper at least 15 days prior to the hearing, and shall be considered adequate in lieu of otherwise required mailed notices.
- d. For site-specific matters, the subject property should be posted with signs describing the type of action to be considered, contact information for the Planning and Zoning Department, and the time, date and location of the hearing. Such signage shall be posted on the site as required by law.

Section 2. General Rules for Testimony in a Quasi-judicial or Annexation-related Public Hearing

- a. At the commencement of the public hearing, the BOCC and PZC members shall disclose whether they have viewed the property which is the subject of the public hearing. If so, they must disclose the approximate date of the site visit and the names and affiliation of everyone present during the visit.
- b. The BOCC and PZC members shall disclose whether they have had any ex parte communications, defined as communication outside of a properly noticed public meeting, about the application being considered with: (a) the applicant; (b) a member of the public; (c) a representative of the applicant; and/or (d) a member of the public. All ex parte communication must be disclosed by identifying the person and the person's employment or affiliation, and by providing a description of the communication.
- c. The Commission/Board, or the Chairman may establish a time limit to be observed by all speakers. This resolution provides the default time limits as follows: Applicant (to describe application and reasons that it meets requirements) – not to exceed fifteen (15) minutes. Staff explanation – not to exceed fifteen (15) minutes. Individual testimony – pro, neutral and con – three (3) minutes per person. Rebuttal by the applicant (no new evidence – only information from the record to rebut assertions by contrary testimony) – as needed.
- d. No person shall be permitted to testify or speak before the hearing agency at a public hearing unless such person has signed his name and written his contact address on sign-up sheets to be provided by

the county. This requirement shall not apply to staff or technical witnesses directed by the chairperson to give evidence or information to the hearing agency.

- e. The presiding officer, or the Commission/Board, is authorized to revise the default time frames and order of proceedings so long as due process rights are maintained. In the event of disagreement by governing board members with procedural rulings by the chairman, the governing board may suspend or amend any one or more of these rules by majority vote of members of the governing board then in attendance, provided that due process rights are preserved.
- f. No person shall be permitted to speak before the Commission/Board at a public hearing until such person is recognized by the chairperson.
- g. Testimony should directly address the subject at hand.
- h. Testimony should not be repetitious with other entries into the record.
- i. Testimony should not be personally derogatory.
- j. Testimony should comply with time restrictions established by the hearing agency.
- k. If oral testimony fails to comply with the aforementioned standards, the chairperson may declare such testimony out of order and require it to cease.
- l. All public hearing proceedings shall be recorded electronically or stenographically and all persons speaking at such public hearings shall speak before a microphone in such a manner as will assure that the recorded testimony or remarks will be complete.

Section 3. Order for Quasi-Judicial Public Hearing

Quasi-judicial hearings involve site-specific decisions (such as considering a request to rezone specific property or consider a variance request) as opposed to legislative hearings which require decisions that have a broad application (such as a change in the text of a zoning or subdivision ordinance, which does not necessarily affect one specific parcel of land). Quasi-judicial Public hearings should follow the order of events set forth below:

- a. Brief introduction of the subject of the hearing by County staff.
- b. Presentation by applicant. (Decision makers should address their questions to the applicant at this time – if possible.)
- c. County staff report. (Decision makers should address their initial questions to staff at this time – if possible.)
- d. Open Public Hearing: Testimony from public in the following order: (Questions from the decision makers should be asked of the person testifying before they leave the podium whenever possible.)
 1. In favor of proposal
 2. Neutral respecting proposal
 3. Opposed to proposal
- e. Rebuttal testimony from applicant. Decision makers should ask any final questions. If new facts are elicited that have not been part of the record, the public must be given an opportunity to respond to the new facts – perhaps by reopening opposing testimony.
- f. Close Public Hearing
- g. Discussion of hearing subject among governing board members. Questions may also be directed to County staff during this period. Any procedural rules requiring a motion prior to discussion are hereby suspended for purposes of such discussion. Decision makers may table the matter until later in the meeting if other public hearings are pending or to a later meeting for deliberations.

- h. The final decision should include a reasoned statement that explains the criteria and standards considered relevant, states the relevant contested facts relied upon, and explains the rationale for the decision based on the applicable provisions of the comprehensive plan for rezoning requests or upon relevant ordinance and statutory decision criteria for other requests, pertinent constitutional principles and factual information contained in the record. It is essential that all decision criteria be addressed in the final written decision, or finding of fact.
- i. After a final written decision is approved, a copy of the document shall be sent promptly by electronic mail, or by U.S. Mail if requested, to a permit or approval applicant. Applicants or affected property owners shall have no more than fifteen (15) days after a final decision is rendered to request reconsideration by the final decision-maker. Any such request must identify specific deficiencies in any final decision. Failure to request reconsideration may invalidate a subsequent judicial appeal. After considering the identified deficiencies, the final decision shall be issued and distributed as above. If no decision is made within the sixty (60) day timeframe for reconsideration, notice of that fact shall be sent promptly by electronic mail, or by U.S. Mail if requested, to a permit or approval applicant.

Section 4. Standards for Written Testimony

Written testimony and exhibits from the public to be admitted at a public hearing shall comply with the following standards:

- a. Written testimony and exhibits must be submitted at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the date of the pertinent public hearing. This provision may be varied through notice to potential hearing participants.
- b. Written testimony should include the signature and address of the submitter.
- c. Written testimony should address the issue at hand.
- d. Written testimony should not be personally derogatory.
- e. If written testimony or an exhibit fails to comply with the aforementioned standards, the chairperson or Commission/Board may declare such testimony inadmissible.

Section 5. Exhibits

All exhibits, photographs, diagrams, maps, evidence and other material presented during the public hearing should be marked or otherwise identified and entered into the record. Exhibits from the Applicant must be submitted at least twenty (20) days prior to the hearing and shall be marked or identified prior to publication of any notice of public hearing. Original exhibits that are capable of duplication may be released to the presenting party if requested in writing, and if acceptable to the Planning Administrator and legal counsel. If original exhibits are released, photocopies or reproducible photos of the originals should be maintained in the record.

Section 6. Records Maintained

Teton County should maintain records of all public meetings in the following manner:

- a. The Teton County Clerk has responsibility for records of meetings held before the Board of County Commissioners.
- b. The Planning and Zoning Department has responsibility for records of meetings held before the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- c. Records of meetings shall be in the following format:
 - 1. Transcribable verbatim recordings of the proceedings should be maintained in conformance with Idaho Code §67-6536 or its successor.

2. Originals or accurate duplicates of written submittals to the hearing record and copies of applications should be maintained in conformance with policies adopted pursuant to Idaho Code §31-871 or its successor.
3. Minutes which catalog the occurrences at the public hearing shall be maintained as required by applicable sections of the Idaho Code.

Section 7. Procedures for Legislative Public Hearings

Public hearings on legislative matters brought pursuant to requirements established by the Local Land Use Planning Act should take place after notice has been provided as required by law. Prior to publishing notice of legislative public hearing a draft of the legislative proposal should be prepared and be available for public inspection no later than the day the notice of public hearing is published. Procedural limits on duration of testimony may be established by the chairman, subject to approval by the governing board. Legislative public hearings do not require final decisions in a manner comparable to those for quasi-judicial proceedings.

Section 8. Site Visits

If the BOCC or PZC wish to conduct a site visit, as a quorum, a motion should be made during a public hearing to conduct a site visit on a date and time certain. In such a case, the site visit should be conducted in a manner similar to any other public meeting and an audio recording should be maintained of the site visit. BOCC or PZC members are encouraged to visit the site individually or with staff, as long as the date of the visit and who was in attendance is disclosed at the beginning of the public hearing.