



# City of Westfield

## PLANNING BOARD

### MEETING GUIDELINES FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Welcome! Please know that Planning Board appreciates your attendance, and that you have every right to be present and observe this public meeting (unless the Board enters Executive Session), but you may only speak or address the Board in the following instances:

1. At the **Public Participation** session at the start of the meeting, but only on matters not the subject of a pending public hearing.
2. During, and relative to, a **Public Hearing**.
3. At any other time, but only at the **discretion of the Chair**.

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#### The Public Hearing Process

The hearing will begin with the applicant describing the proposal to Board, followed by members asking questions. The Chair then will open the floor and invite public input, typically taken in 3 separate parts:

- Those wishing to ask a question of fact. (questions only, please!)
- Those wishing to speak in favor.
- Those wishing to speak in opposition.



#### **⚠ Please follow these basic rules when commenting:**

1. Wait to be recognized; only one speaker at a time!
2. Come to the podium and give your name and address.
3. Speak only into the microphone. (This meeting is televised and recorded, and you will not be heard otherwise.)
4. Direct questions or comments to the Chair, not the applicant.
5. Refrain from engaging in conversations or personal attacks. You may not cross-examine the applicant, Board members, or other speakers. (The Chair may ask the applicant to respond to your questions or comments at the end of the session.)

The Board may then **close the hearing**, after which no further testimony or information can be accepted; or it may **continue the hearing** to a specific future meeting. The Board typically makes a decision immediately after the hearing is closed, but it may occur at another meeting.

Remember that a public hearing is not a referendum on the project. Any decision ultimately rests solely with the Board, considering its discretion, regulations and any public comments.

- ⊘ Please do not attempt to discuss or influence any Board member on matters of a pending public hearing outside of an open meeting. Members are prohibited from considering any such *ex parte* communication. You may discuss the matter with City staff any time.**
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