



Franklin County

Planning and Building Department

Jerrold B. MacPherson—Director

Planning Commission Public Hearing Procedures, Protocols and Etiquette

The Planning Commission Process:

The Planning Commission is a seven (7) member volunteer board that is appointed by the Board of County Commissioners.

This public hearing is the **‘only’ open record hearing** for a land use application and is the public’s opportunity to speak in favor or against an application. The Planning Commission is not a "final" decision making committee but rather makes "recommendations" to the elected officials for the different applications they review. The purpose of the ‘open record public hearing’ is for the Commission 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.

Copies of the agenda and staff reports are available in the hearing room. Please ask staff if you have any questions.

The Public Hearing:

The Chair will introduce the item on the agenda. The public hearing will be “opened” and Staff will be requested to give a summary of the Staff report.

1. **The Chair will request input from proponents (people in favor of the application).** Please step forward to the middle of the room or near a podium and state your name and address for the record before stating your testimony.
2. **The Chair will request input from opponents (people not in favor of the application).** Please step forward to the middle of the room or near a podium and state your name and address for the record before stating your testimony.
3. **The Chair will ask the public for any clarification of statements or questions.** Also the Planning Commission members may ask questions of proponents and opponents. Please step forward to the middle of the room or near a podium 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 Planning Commission Member 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 speak clearly. State your name and address for the record;

Speak only when recognized by the Chair;

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;

Please be prepared to limit your comments 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 Commission unless you step forward to the middle of the room or near a podium;

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

The Commission’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 and are grounds for removal from the hearing room by order of the Chair. Pager and cellular phones should be turned off or placed on vibrate as to not disturb the hearing.

Please contact the Planning and Building Department at 545-3521 if you have questions.