



NNA Zoning Rules of Conduct, Timeline, & Working Group Guide

Zoning in Philadelphia

The Philadelphia Zoning Code allows for a number of different types of buildings, modifications, and uses across many different classifications of properties in the city. These types of property uses that are allowed according to the zoning code are called **by-right uses**, and do not require community input.

For any proposed building, modification, or use that does not meet the specifications of the current zoning code, the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) will issue a rejection. The property owner may then choose to change their intended plans, or they may apply for a **variance**. Variances are heard by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).

Civic groups across the city, including Newbold Neighbors Association (NNA), are asked to provide a necessary service for the appeals process by holding public meetings in which the property owner is invited to share their plans in a public forum, and allowing those present to have their voices heard by means of a vote and/or public discussion.

It is NNA's goal as a civic organization to provide the ZBA with an accurate count of votes for and against a given property's appeal, as well as a list of provisos addressing public concerns. Possible votes are (a) support with provisos, (b) oppose, and (c) abstain. NNA shall present the ZBA with two vote counts: the first being the overall vote taken at the meeting for a given property, and the second being the vote of the proximal neighbors (anyone who resides or owns property within a 3 block radius of the property). We will attempt to hear and address as many concerns as possible, but please be mindful that time constraints do not always allow for every concern to be resolved.

Individual citizens are **always** allowed and invited to attend the property's ZBA hearing in person if they feel that their issues with the property have not been adequately addressed. For more information about a property's ZBA hearing, please call the Philadelphia Boards Administration Unit at 215.686.2429.

We ask attendees to keep in mind that the point of a public meeting is for their votes to be counted for or against a zoning case, and to have their issues with a property entered into the meeting record. Zoning meetings are not a place to grandstand, make accusatory statements, raise issues unrelated to the properties being heard, or promote unrelated self interests.

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We also ask attendees to remember that the ZBA is concerned with a particular variance's relation to the zoning code. The more an issue can be related to the zoning code, the more weight it will carry. Relevant concerns and zoning code issues brought up by the public **will** be included in the final letter to the ZBA.

As an organization, we recognize that the ability to hear these zoning cases is a responsibility that carries a certain amount of obligation to the community, and especially to those willing to take the time to attend and have their voices heard.

In order to allow us to fulfill on this responsibility, we have put the following guidelines in place to ensure that these meetings run smoothly and to allow the zoning committee to hear from as many perspectives as possible while respecting that people are volunteering their time to attend.

Rules of Conduct

All attendees of public zoning meetings being run by NNA are expected to conduct themselves in the following manner:

- Attendees will be respectful of others while speaking or waiting to speak.
- Attendees must wait until the committee chair or meeting facilitator recognizes them before they are invited to speak.
- Use of slurs, epithets, derogatory statements, or other forms of disruptive or disrespectful language will not be tolerated.
- Attendees will adhere to the time constraints imposed by the zoning committee chair.
 - For a normal amount of zoning cases, this will require keeping questions and comments under 1 minute in length.
 - Various factors may increase or decrease the amount of time allowed for discussion.
 - It is the zoning committee moderator's responsibility to inform attendees of how much time they have as well as enforcing the limits.
- Any topics or points that are not directly related to the property being heard will be noted and tabled for later discussion, time permitting.

If an attendee is unable to conduct themselves in a manner in line with the above guidelines, they will be given one warning and asked to abide by the rules. *If that attendee is unable to conduct themselves properly after being warned, they will be asked to leave for the remainder of the meeting. They will be allowed to return to future meetings.*

If an attendee is asked to leave and refuses, NNA reserves the right to ask for assistance from the police department in order to have the attendee removed. *If an attendee is asked to leave 3 separate meetings or if the police are required to remove an attendee from the meeting, that attendee will be barred from future meetings until they request formal reinstatement from the NNA board president, who will bring the issue to the NNA board for a vote.*

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NNA's Zoning Process

Two Weeks (10 Business Days) Before Public Meeting

- All necessary paperwork from applicants **MUST** be submitted and received by the zoning chair
 - Any applicants submitting their information **AFTER** the deadline will be referred to the following zoning public meeting date and a letter will be sent requesting a continuance for their ZBA hearing.
- The committee chair will communicate the following with the zoning working group members via group mailing list:
 - The properties to be heard
 - Their zoning refusal
 - Supplemental paperwork
- The zoning working group will discuss relevant zoning issues and questions via email.

One Week (5 Business Days) Before Public Meeting

- Fliers and notices will be electronically distributed to the zoning committee members and other interested community members for dispersal and posting throughout the neighborhood.
 - Limited amounts of printed flyers and notices will be available upon request from the zoning committee chair.
- Fliers and notices will be electronically distributed to all applicants for posting on their property and surrounding block.
 - Applicants are required to post one copy of the meeting notice next to their orange zoning notice and four copies on telephone poles near the property (preferably corners).
 - Applicants are encouraged to take photos documenting the posting of their flyers.
- The website, shared calendars, and Facebook will be updated with the relevant information, including time, date, and location of the meeting as well as the list of properties being heard.
- Our membership, as well as any member of the public interested in receiving zoning notices by email, will be notified by email blast.

Three Business Days Before The Public Meeting

- The full committee agenda will be sent around to the committee members as well as the NNA board, including a compiled list of the zoning questions attached to each property.
- A reminder announcement will be sent out via social networking.

The Public Meeting

- The zoning working group should arrive 20-30 minutes before the meeting begins.
- The doors will open to the public 10 minutes before the meeting begins.

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- The sign-in table will be staffed by a committee member who will ensure that people sign in, and that agendas and voting ballots are handed out.
- Paper and pens will be provided on each table for attendees to write their questions down.
- Tables should be set up in a U shape for applicants to present from the open space using a microphone and speaker system provided by NNA.
- The committee chair will welcome everyone, explain the rules, go over the list of properties to ascertain whether the presenters are present, and then introduce the meeting facilitator.
- The meeting facilitator will invite the applicants to present in the order listed in the agenda.
- Applicants will present their plans.
- Attendees with questions to address directly to the applicant will indicate that they'd like to speak by raising their hand. The facilitator will decide the order of questions, and will recognize each attendee in turn.
- Each attendee will have 1 minute to ask their questions, and the applicant will have 1 minute to respond.
- After all direct questions have been asked, the applicant will be asked to leave the room to allow for public discussion.
- Attendees with other questions or concerns will indicate that they'd like to speak by raising their hand. The moderator will decide the order of questions, and will recognize each attendee in turn.
- Each attendee will have 1 minute to voice their concerns.
- The applicant will then be allowed to reenter if they choose, and the facilitator will introduce the next applicant.

Directly After The Public Meeting

- Votes will be tallied into a spreadsheet, including the voter's address and their vote for each of the properties.
- This spreadsheet will be mapped using an online mapping service.
- A tally of the votes will be counted, including:
 - the general public vote of all present at the meetings.
 - the vote of the proximal neighbors (anyone who lists an address within 3 blocks of the property up for appeal)
- The voting sheets will be scanned for record keeping purposes, and the original sheets will be filed by the zoning committee chair.

Within Three Business Days After The Public Meeting

- Letters indicating the vote count (both the general public vote and the proximal neighbor vote) as well as the organization's positions with respect to the variance being sought will be prepared and shared with the working group for comment.
- Changes suggested and agreed upon by the working group will be incorporated into the letters, which will not be sent until there is consensus that the letters accurately reflect the concerns brought up at the meeting.

Within One Week of the Public Meeting

- The letters, including committee feedback, will be:

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- sent by email to the ZBA, addressed to the current ZBA chair
- cc'd to the 2nd District Councilperson, NNA President, and the Zoning Working Group
- posted on the NNA website

Rules Concerning The Zoning Working Group

The Zoning Working Group shall be comprised of between 5 and 9 members-in-good-standing of the organization who:

- Have attended at least 3 zoning meetings in the past year
- Can commit to being available for at least 3 hours per month to attend the zoning meeting and take part in discussion
- Are able to assist in committee business and communications.

Requests to join the zoning working group are to be addressed to the zoning committee chair, and must meet the approval of a majority of the existing working group members. The NNA Board reserves the right to remove a member of the working group at any time if the member is unable to meet the requirements and responsibilities of membership in the zoning working group.

Zoning Working Group Responsibilities

Members of the NNA Zoning Working Group should:

- Have a desire to learn about the Philadelphia Zoning Code, and to be able to read and comprehend portions of the code as needed.
- Be able to respond to emails related to the group within 24 hours, unless advance notice of leave is given to the Zoning Chair.
- Be able to work together in a group environment, and to allow for constructive disagreement over a zoning issue when necessary.
- Plan to expand their zoning knowledge. When fiscally possible, NNA will provide funds for up to two members of the working group to attend the Citizens Planning Institute (CPI) training and certification program per year. (www.citizensplanninginstitute.org)

Zoning Working Group Responsibilities During A Public Meeting

- The zoning working group shall keep a record of the properties discussed, including
 - Applicable zoning issues presented by members of the public
 - Possible reasons to delay a vote
 - Follow up steps recommended by group consensus
- At all times, members of the zoning working group should be courteous and respectful in their communications, by phone, email, or in person.
- At no time should a member of the zoning working group resort to unprofessional communications, including sarcasm, derisive comments, or slurs of any sort.

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Rules Concerning Zoning Procedures and Documents

- The zoning procedures set out in this document are subject to change at the request of the Zoning Working Group, and must be approved by a majority of the board members of Newbold Neighbors Association.
- While every effort is made not to modify this document on a regular basis, please keep in mind that as the zoning code changes or in response to public feedback, the Zoning Working Group may make changes to how public meetings are run or how information is disseminated to the public.
- All changes will be announced at the following zoning public meeting, as well as electronically through the NNA e-news mailing list.
- We invite comments and concerns about NNA's zoning process and documentation — please address all inquiries to the Planning and Zoning Committee Chairperson (contact information available at www.newboldneighbors.org/contact/).