

**Winchester Planning Board
Procedures for Public Hearings
for Town Meeting Articles**

Adopted by the Planning Board 8/27/2019

1. Opening of Hearing

- a) Chair calls the meeting to order: “Welcome to a public hearing of the Winchester Planning Board. Please sign in.”
- b) If the meeting is being recorded, restate that it is being recorded for the benefit of those who have come just for the hearing.
- c) Chair introduces the members of the Planning Board and the town planner.

2. Meeting Purpose

Chair announces the purpose of the public hearing: “The hearing is called to inform the public about potential changes to the Winchester Zoning Bylaw or the Code of By-laws at the upcoming Town Meeting.” The chair also may read aloud the legal notice.

3. Rules and Procedures

- a) Chair announces the following:
 - 1. “When you begin to speak, please state your name, company if applicable, and address for the record.”
 - 2. “Please direct your comments and questions to the chair.”
 - 3. “Speakers are asked to come to the table to address the board and shall leave the table when finished.”
- b) Chair has the right to exclude irrelevant, immaterial, or repetitive comments.
- c) Chair shall maintain decorum and may have unruly persons removed.

4. Presentation by the Planning Board

- a) If the town planner is presenting, the chair clarifies that the planner is presenting on behalf of the Planning Board.
- b) If the presentation is a dry-run for Town Meeting, the presentation will be five minutes with a possible five-minute extension (ten minutes total) to explain the warrant article.

5. Memos and letters

The chair lists any memos or letters received by the Board and summarizes them.

6. Comments from Town Staff and Other Boards

The Board reviews comments from the Engineering Department, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Zoning Enforcement Officer, the Historical Commission, the Design Review Committee, the Select Board, the Finance Committee, and any other staff, agencies or boards.

7. Opening of Public Comment Period

- a) Chair opens the hearing to the public and asks the audience how many people wish to speak. Both questions and comments are allowed.
- b) Each speaker is given five minutes, with an extension of no more than two minutes allowed at the chair's discretion.
- c) The Board chair and town planner may respond to questions from the public. Through the chair, other Board members may respond or pose questions to the speaker.

8. Board Discussion

Board members discuss the warrant article.

9. Board Votes

- a) As set forth in MGL Ch. 40A §5, Adoption or Change of Zoning Ordinances or Bylaws, "No zoning ordinance or by-law or amendment thereto shall be adopted until after the planning board in a city or town, and the city council or a committee designated or appointed for the purpose by said council, has each held a public hearing thereon, together or separately, at which interested persons shall be given an opportunity to be heard."
- b) Three members of the Board present constitute a majority of the Board. The affirmative vote of three members is required to place the article on the Town Meeting warrant.