



Pittsburgh Department of City Planning

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

WHAT IS THE ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT?

The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) is an adjudicative body that reviews land use proposals in accordance with the requirements of the Zoning Code. The Board reviews such matters in public evidentiary hearings at which the applicant and impacted neighbors may submit evidence or testimony in support of or in opposition to the request.

HOW LONG DOES THE ZBA PROCESS TAKE?

The ZBA process is a component of the Zoning Review process. For the ZBA process, a minimum 21-day posted notice period is required before the hearing. Following the hearing, the ZBA has 45 days to issue a decision, this may be shorter or longer as circumstances dictate.

HOW DOES A HEARING GET SCHEDULED?

All applications require a Zoning and Development Review Application (ZDR), which can be initiated online at the [OneStopPGH](#) portal. There is a filing fee of \$50. In addition to the OneStopPGH online portal, the ZDR and fees may also be submitted in person at the OneStopPGH Counter at 200 Ross St., 3rd floor, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., or mailed to Dept. of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections, Attn: ZDR, 200 Ross St., Suite 320, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

The hearing date and time will be coordinated by email or phone. Once a date has been confirmed, the applicant will need to pick-up the notice poster at the Zoning Office (200 Ross St, 3rd Floor) open daily from 8 am to 12 pm. For assistance on this process, please contact the Zoning Staff reviewing the project. For projects requiring Basic Zoning Review, contact Svetlana Ipatova at 412-255-2214 or svetlana.ipatova@pittsburghpa.gov with questions.

HOW MUCH IS THE FEE?

The fee for the Zoning Board of Adjustment is \$550. Please see the [Fee Schedule](#) for any additional review fees that may apply to the whole project. Fees are non-refundable, regardless of whether the request is approved or denied. Payment must be made prior to the hearing. Fees can be paid via credit card or E-check at the [OneStopPGH](#) online portal, a fee will apply. Check or money order payable to "Treasurer, City of Pittsburgh" will also be accepted in person at the OneStopPGH Counter at 200 Ross St., 3rd floor, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC NOTIFICATION PROCESS?

Upon application, the applicant will be given one or more notice posters indicating the date, time and nature of the request. The notice must be hung at the subject property at least 21 days prior to the date of the scheduled ZBA hearing. The notice poster must be readily visible and readable from the property line along the primary street.

On the date of posting, the applicant must take a photo of the posted notice. The photo should clearly show the location of the poster on the property. The photo must indicate the date the notice was posted in order to verify that the 21-day public notice requirement has been met.

The applicant must bring a printed copy of the notice photo to the hearing (displaying it on a phone is not sufficient).

HOW WILL NEIGHBORS BE NOTIFIED?

The Department of City Planning will mail hearing notices to abutting property owners. In addition, it is strongly recommended that applicants to the ZBA reach out to your neighbors and local community organizations in advance of the hearing. Failure to do so can result in the delay of your hearing. Planning Staff can provide contact information for relevant community groups if necessary.

If the project is within the boundaries of a [Registered Community Organization](#) (RCO), a Development Activities Meeting with the community may be required, depending on the scope of the project. If required, the meeting must take place at least 30 days before the first City public hearing.

WHAT MATERIALS ARE NEEDED AT THE HEARING?

The applicant must bring:

- A printed photograph of the notice poster which clearly shows its location on the Subject Property
- A site plan which details the proposal
- Applicants who are not the owner of the property must be prepared to explain and document their authorization to pursue the request
- Evidence which justifies the approval of the request, as set forth in the Zoning Code's approval criteria

It is the applicant's obligation to furnish sufficient evidence to justify the approval of the request.



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All parties, applicants and interested parties, can present evidence to the Board. Helpful evidence may include:

- Photographs of the property and the surrounding neighborhood
- Elevations and detailed drawings of the proposal
- Business or operational plans
- Evidence which demonstrates how the proposal will or will not affect the surrounding neighborhood
- Evidence which demonstrates how the proposal does or does not meet the Zoning Code's approval criteria

WHEN WILL THE ZBA DECISION BE ISSUED?

In many cases, the record will be closed after the hearing has completed. For in-depth cases or appeals with considerable opposition, the ZBA may allow proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law to be submitted by each party. Typically, the ZBA allows two or three weeks after the hearing for these to be submitted, at which point the record will then be closed.

After the record is closed, the ZBA will issue a decision within 45 days. This decision will be sent via US Mail to the applicant and all parties who appeared or testified and who signed the sign-in sheet with a mailing address at the hearing.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A DECISION IS ISSUED?

If the project requires Site Plan Review or Zoning Review with Planning Commission, the applicant must continue to work with the assigned zoning staff to meet all requirements of the Zoning Code before the Record of Zoning Approval (ROZA) can be issued.

If the project requires Basic Zoning Review and the decision has been granted, the applicant must schedule an appointment with Svetlana Ipatova at 412-255-2214 in order to process the zoning voucher. All applicable conditions in the decision must be fulfilled before the Record of Zoning Approval (ROZA) can be issued.

Once the applicant receives the ROZA, they may proceed to the Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections to apply for the appropriate permits.

DO ZBA DECISION EXPIRE?

The ZBA decision expires one year after the mailing date. A permit should be obtained, and substantial construction or occupancy should begin within one year of approval.

If additional time is needed, the applicant may request a one-year extension by writing the ZBA with the ZBA case number, the address of the subject property, and a brief explanation on why an extension is needed.

MAY A ZBA DECISION BE APPEALED?

Yes, any affected parties dissatisfied with the ZBA decision may appeal to the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County within thirty (30) calendar days of the written decision's mailing date. The appeal process starts at the Department of Court Records located on the main floor of the City-County Building, 414 Grant Street. A transcript of the ZBA hearing will be required. Appellants are strongly encouraged to consult an attorney.

WHERE CAN TRANSCRIPTS BE REQUESTED?

Transcripts of hearings may be obtained by calling the reporting agency, Network Deposition Services at 412-281-7908. A fee will be charged. Please have the ZBA case number and the date of the hearing available.

WHEN AND WHERE ARE THE HEARINGS HELD?

The ZBA meets most Thursday mornings in the Civic Building at 200 Ross Street, 1st Floor Conference Room, Pittsburgh, 15219. Please note there is a ramped entry from the rear of the building, accessed from Third Avenue.

ARE THE ZBA AGENDAS PUBLICLY AVAILABLE?

The ZBA agendas are available [online](#). Email zoning@pittsburghpa.gov and request to be added to the ZBA agenda mailing list to receive all ZBA agendas by email.

ARE THE MEETINGS PUBLIC?

Members of the public are invited and encouraged to attend and testify on projects that impact their neighborhood.

ARE PAST ZBA DECISIONS PUBLICLY AVAILABLE?

Yes, the public may request to view ZBA decisions at the Zoning Counter, 200 Ross Street, 3rd Floor from 8 am to 1 pm weekdays. Copies of decisions may be emailed upon request.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Svetlana Ipatova, Zoning Case Review Specialist, at svetlana.ipatova@pittsburghpa.gov or 412-255-2214.