

JERSEY CITY QUICK GUIDE

PLANNING + ZONING BOARD VIRTUAL MEETINGS



MEETING FORMAT What to expect during each Meeting

The following outlines the sequence of Planning Board and Zoning Board meetings:

1. Call to Order
2. Sunshine Announcement
3. Roll Call of Commissioners
4. Swearing in of Staff
5. Correspondence/Adjournments
6. Old Business
(i.e. applications carried from previous hearings)
7. New Business
(i.e. applications appearing for first time)
8. Resolutions Memorialized
9. Executive Session, if needed
10. Adjournment

Meetings typically occur twice a month (for both Boards) at City Hall. Planning Board meetings are held on Tuesday evenings at 5:30PM. Zoning Board meetings are held on Thursday evenings at 6:30PM. Meeting schedules, agendas, and Zoom links for access can be found on the [City Planning website](#).

NOTICING PROCEDURES Why was I noticed about an application?

Applicants must notice the community as to when their application will be heard, and provide general information on the scope of the proposal. Applicants must notice all property owners within 200ft of the application site by certified mail, and must post a general notice through the newspaper. Additionally, some Redevelopment Plans require that the Applicant notice a designated SID or Neighborhood Association of any applications within the Redevelopment Area.

Notices provide a description of the location and existing conditions of the site, and detail proposed changes including variances or deviations to be sought. Noticing helps to codify deadlines and timeframes while promoting a better understanding between the community and Applicants. Notices must be postmarked within 10 days of a hearing date.

Some applications are exempt from noticing, such as Minor Site Plans that are not seeking deviations.

HEARING PROCESS Procedures and Sequence

Each case will follow a similar format over the course of a hearing;

1. **Testimony:** The Applicant's experts will provide testimony. For many cases, testimony will be lead and directed by an attorney. In some cases, a licensed professional or the Applicant themselves may lead this process.
→When testimony is complete, the Commissioners can ask questions **related specifically** to the testimony.
2. **Public Comment:** The public is invited to speak to the Board regarding the specific application at hand. Residents within 200ft of the application site will have first priority.
3. **Staff Comments:** Staff may answer any questions related to general zoning, best practices, or specifics of the application. Staff may also recommend conditions of approval if necessary.
4. **Deliberation:** The Board will deliberate the application and discuss and deviations or variances. Deliberation will end when a motion is made and seconded to vote.
5. **Vote:** Staff will conduct roll call and record the vote of each eligible Commissioner and announce whether the motion carries.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES OF A HEARING?



The Board must remain objective and evaluate each application based on its compliance with the Land Development Ordinance and the information provided in testimony. After the hearing of each case, the application will receive one of the following decisions:

- Approval (motion carries)
- Approval, with conditions
- Denial
- Denial, with conditions
- Carried for continuation at a later meeting

Who is the **PLANNING BOARD** and what do they do?

The Planning Board is made up of 14 members, 2 of whom serve as alternates. The members are appointed by the Mayor's Office, and must meet a required set mix of Classes(I-IV) including the mayor or a designee (I), a municipal employee (II), a member of the governing body (III) and general residents (IV). All Commissioners on the Board are required to be residents of Jersey City with the exception of the Class II appointee.

The Planning Board hears all applications within Redevelopment Plan Areas throughout the city. Applications within Redevelopment Plan Areas cannot seek 'd' variances. This board also hears applications that seek 'c' variances from the City's land development ordinance. Typically, these variances are related to bulk standards such as:

- Height (less than 10ft or 10% above permitted)
- Number of stories
- Lot coverage
- Building coverage
- Setbacks
- Parking requirements
- Design standards

Additionally, the Planning Board hears applications for signage in Redevelopment Plan Areas and property subdivisions.

For all Planning Board applications, 5 commissioners must be in attendance in order to reach a quorum., with a simple majority affirmative vote needed for approval.

MY ITEM WAS CARRIED WHAT NOW?



Carried items are items that were listed on the agenda but have been adjourned to a later meeting. Typically, items will be carried to the following meeting with preservation of notice, meaning the Applicant does not have to re-notice the public for the new meeting date. To stay informed on when an item will be heard, check upcoming Agendas, published Action Agendas, or contact the Division of City Planning.

Who is the **ZONING BOARD** and what do they do?

The Zoning Board, or Board of Adjustment, is made up of 11 members appointed by the Mayor's Office. Of the 11 commissioners, 4 serve as alternates. All Commissioners on the Board are residents of Jersey City (Class IV).

The majority of Zoning Board applications are seeking 'd' variances from the City's Land Development Ordinance. These variances include:

- d(1) Use
- d(2) Expansion of a non-conforming use
- d(3) Conditional use
- d(4) Floor-Area-Ratio (FAR)
- d(5) Density
- d(6) Height (if more than 10ft or 10% above permitted height within the zone district)

For any applications seeking a 'd' variance, 5 commissioners must be in attendance in order to reach a quorum. Approval of applications seeking a 'd' variance requires a minimum of 5 affirmative votes from the Board.

Applications that seek 'c' variances but do not meet the threshold for Site Plan review are also heard by the Zoning Board. For 'c' variance applications, a simple majority affirmative vote is required for approval.

The Zoning Board also hears appeals of the Zoning Officer's determination and appeals to decisions. Appeals have to be filed within 20 days of reasonable knowledge, and must go before the Board within 45 days of filing.

WHAT IS THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION?



Applications within designated Historic Districts or effecting local landmarks must first appear before the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The commission will determine whether a proposal will have an adverse effect on the historic character of the site or district. An approval or denial from the HPC is not a binding decision, but is presented to the Planning/Zoning Board as a recommendation from qualified experts.

I want to **COMMENT ON A PROJECT**, how do I participate?

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings are currently held virtually via Zoom. See instructions below for providing public comment in a virtual format:



When Public Comment is opened, Raise Your Hand by clicking the hand icon, or by dialing *9 if calling into the meeting. Public will be promoted to speak in the order that raised hands queue in the Participants panel of Zoom.



Once promoted, turn on your camera and unmute yourself. Callers can unmute by dialing *6. Before you begin your comments, you will be sworn in. Provide your name, address, and state whether you support or oppose the application.



Focus on being clear and concise in your comments. Address ideas or physical components of the project, not people. Speak to the application at hand, not to general conditions or problems of the larger area.



Neighborhood Associations and other community groups may be asked to designate a spokesperson to convey the opinion of the larger association.



Be cognizant of the time limit. Typically, each member of the public is allotted 3-5 minutes to speak, as determined by the Chair. The Chair will make the public aware of the time limit.

HOW DO I STAY INFORMED?

Visit the [City Planning website](#) to access the following information:

- Zoom Meeting Info for meetings
- Planning Board, Zoning Board, + HPC Agendas
- The Application Intake Log
- The JC Land Development Ordinance
- The JC Interactive Zoning Map
- Forms + Instructions for Submitting Applications

Digital materials for scheduled applications can be found by searching the Case Number or address on the [Jersey City Data Portal](#).