



# 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 which reviews land use proposals in accordance with the requirements of the Zoning Code. The Board reviews such matters in public evidentiary hearings in 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 up to 45 days to issue a decision.

### HOW DOES A HEARING GET SCHEDULED?

Applicants to the ZBA are required to file a Building and Development Application (BDA), which is submitted online through the [OneStopPGH portal](#) or at the OneStop counter at 412 Boulevard of the Allies from 9AM-3PM, Monday-Friday. After staff have reviewed the application and determined that the proposal requires a ZBA hearing, staff will contact the applicant to schedule a hearing date.

### WHEN AND WHERE ARE THE HEARINGS HELD?

The ZBA meets the first three Thursdays of the month, in the hearing room in the basement of **412 Boulevard of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA, 15219**. Applicants and attendees may attend the hearing either virtually on Zoom or in-person.

### HOW MUCH IS THE FEE?

The \$400 ZBA fee is assessed in addition to the base zoning review fees. 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 online at the [OneStopPGH](#) online portal or in-person at the permit counter.

### WHAT IS THE PUBLIC NOTIFICATION PROCESS?

Upon application, the applicant will be given one or more notice posters indicating the date and time of the 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.

### 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 their neighbors and local community organizations in advance of the hearing. Staff can provide contact information for 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 public hearing. City staff assigned to your project will assist you in setting up this meeting.

### WHAT MATERIALS ARE NEEDED AT THE HEARING?

The applicant must prepare a presentation showing:

- A 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.

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

- Photographs and maps of the property/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



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### 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 be closed.

After the record is closed, the ZBA will issue a decision within 45 days. The decision is sent by e-mail to the applicant and all parties who appeared or testified and provide an e-mail address to the Department of City Planning. The decision is [also posted on DCP website](#).

### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A DECISION IS ISSUED?

If the project requires additional review, the applicant must continue to work with the assigned zoning staff to meet all requirements of the Zoning Code. 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 continue to work with the Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections to complete any remaining occupancy and building review process.

### 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 case number, the address of the subject property, and a brief explanation as to 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.

### ARE THE ZBA AGENDAS PUBLICLY AVAILABLE?

The ZBA agendas are available [online](#). Email [zoning@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto: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. Meetings are also livestreamed and saved on the Department's [YouTube page](#).

### ARE PAST ZBA DECISIONS PUBLICLY AVAILABLE?

Yes, the public may request to view ZBA decisions. Copies of decisions may be emailed upon request. Please contact [zoningboard@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:zoningboard@pittsburghpa.gov).

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact [zoning@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:zoning@pittsburghpa.gov) or [zoningboard@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:zoningboard@pittsburghpa.gov).