

# **Town of Dedham Planning & Zoning (PZ) Department**

## ***Updated Virtual Meeting Policies & Procedures***

*August 2020*

### **Security**

- All virtual meetings/public hearings will utilize the Zoom Webinar format to ensure the Boards and Committees the PZ Department support can conduct a safe, efficient, and fair public meeting for all members of the public.
- PZ staff have the ability to implement/utilize robust meeting security features prior to and during virtual meetings
- Staff protocol for any significant disruptions is the following (prompted or unprompted by Chair):
  - Mute all participants as needed
  - Lock meeting
  - “Kick-off” disruptive participants
  - Un-lock meeting when disruption over
- Other lesser disruptions will be noted/recognized by Chair. The Chair will provide reminder of rules for virtual public participation. If needed, Chair can instruct staff to take necessary procedures as stated above.

### **Public Notice**

- Public Notice will be accomplished through the following ways:
  - Meetings posted on Town website/calendar and Town Hall per M.G.L. 40A
  - Public hearing notices in newspapers per M.G.L. 40A
  - Posted on Department’s Facebook page
  - When required, abutter notification (mailed) per M.G.L. 40A
  - Department email distribution list (500+)

### **Public Comment**

- Public Comment will be accomplished through the following methods:
  - Virtual Meetings (public comment will be recognized by Chair through the Zoom meeting interactive functions and moderated by Planning Staff)
  - Teleconference (public comment via telephone, prompted by Chair)
  - Email to Planning Staff (stated on agendas, notices, website, etc.) prior to and during meeting/hearing
  - Facebook (prior to and during meeting/hearing).
  - Voice Messages (stated on agendas, notices, website, etc.) prior to meeting/hearing
  - Dedham TV (either livestream or on demand via Dedham TV’s website)
  - Staff will provide email & phone number on Planning Board presentation as requested
- The Department will provide email and phone number for any issues with regard to access
- The Department provides links to Zoom tutorials/FAQs on the PZ website page and on all meeting notices/agendas.

## **Abutter Notification**

As abutter notifications have been updated to provide virtual meeting information similar to public notices/agendas. The mailed notifications will list the above noted methods of public comment, in addition to the requirements of M.G.L. 40A.

## **Applicants**

- Applications are being provided to the P&Z department electronically, with a provision for one hardcopy for records
- All applicant documents/plans are uploaded to Dropbox and links are provided on all meeting notices/agendas
- For presentation at virtual meetings, staff are managing documents submitted by Applicants unless requested by the Applicant
- Applicants are sent the agenda w/meeting info prior to meetings/hearings.
- Applicants are also provided Department policies/procedures for participating in virtual meetings.
- Applicants are to notify staff of any participants/speakers associated with the proposal prior to the virtual meeting.
- Staff is working toward updating the PZ Department webpage to provide applicant plans/materials
- PZ staff will continually seek to ensure Boards & Committees are provided all relevant documents/materials at least five days prior to any meeting/hearing.