



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)

I. Procedures for Testifying at a Planning Board Meeting, Hearing or Special Subject Case

(Rules of Procedures Sections 1.106, 1.107, 1.108 & 1.109)

1. Do I have to sign up to testify at a board meeting?

A sign in sheet will be located at the back of the meeting room beginning approximately 60 minutes before the meeting is scheduled to begin. Please provide your name, address, the item you plan to speak on, and whether you are in support or opposition.

2. What is the process for giving testimony?

Speakers will be called to the podium in the order in which they signed in or as modified by the Chairperson pursuant to the board's Rules of Procedure.

3. How much time will I be given to present testimony?

The Chairperson determines the amount of time allocated to individuals and groups. Typically, individuals may speak for up to 3 minutes and a group spokesperson may speak up to 5 minutes.

The board encourages large groups to designate a spokesperson to provide a comprehensive presentation of the group's position and to reduce repetitious testimony. The spokesperson may also submit the written testimony and/or a petition of support/opposition from the individual members of the group.

Only one member of a recognized group may testify as the group spokesperson to be granted 5 minutes. All other individuals from the group who wish to testify may do so as "individuals" for a maximum of 3 minutes. Time may not be ceded by a spokesperson or individual to another speaker.

4. Can I submit written testimony to the board and if so, how and when?

Written testimony can be submitted prior to and/or during the meeting. The board encourages anyone who cannot attend the meeting to submit written testimony by email to planningboard@howardcountymd.gov or by mail to Planning Board, 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043. Written testimony should be received no later than 5:00 pm on the date of the meeting/hearing you are testifying on and will be considered as if you testified in person. You may also submit your written testimony at the meeting and are asked to provide 7 copies for distribution to the board and staff. If the meeting is continued to another date, the board will continue to accept written public testimony up to 5:00 pm on the date of the continuation.

5. What must be included in my testimony?

- Oral testimony must begin with your name and address.
- Written testimony must include the case name or number, your name, and address.

II. Procedures for Testifying at a Planning Board Quasi-Judicial Hearing

(Rules of Procedures 1.105)

1. Do I have to sign up to testify at a board hearing?

Same as number 1 above. Additionally, according to Rules of Procedure Section 1.105.C.6, individuals wishing to testify at a hearing “shall sign his or her name to the roster either for the petition, in favor of the petition, or opposed to the petition. Only individuals who have signed up to testify prior to the end of the petitioner’s case will be permitted to testify at any subsequent hearing on the same case.”

2. How much time will I be given to present testimony?

Individual and group spokesperson testimony is untimed.

3. Can I submit written testimony to the board and if so, how and when?

Written testimony is subject to cross examination and therefore is only accepted at the hearing. Written testimony should be submitted at the hearing along with 8 copies for distribution.

4. What must be included in my testimony?

Oral testimony must begin with your name and address. An individual testifying on behalf of any civic, community, or citizens association shall show that he or she is authorized to speak for and represent the views of that association. The authorization may consist of a fully adopted resolution of the association signed by the president or attested by the secretary. The individual testifying shall state the number of members in the association and its geographic boundaries.

All testimony must be relevant to the criteria upon which the Board is charged with making their decision. This criteria varies depending on the case type, but can be found outlined in the technical staff report.

(This FAQ includes a summary of the Howard County Planning Board Rules of Procedure. The full document can be found at <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Planning-and-Zoning/Boards-and-Commissions/Planning-Board>)