

Guidelines for Testimony at Board of County Commissioner Public Meetings

Introduction

Public testimony is a vital part of the land use process in Douglas County. The public is encouraged to attend and provide testimony at public hearings and meetings held by the Board of County Commissioners. Public hearings and meetings are livestreamed and an audio recording is usually available within 24 hours after the hearing at www.douglas.co.us and search for **Archived Audio**.

Land use items are officially scheduled on an agenda which can be viewed on the County's website the Friday prior to the meeting or hearing. Occasionally an agenda item may need to be continued or rescheduled. Please check the website for updates.

For each land use item, the general format of a hearing or meeting begins with a staff and applicant presentation. Public testimony will then be opened by the Chair.

The Board of County Commissioners makes the final decision on most land use applications. The Board's Land Use Meetings and Public Hearings are generally held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month, beginning at 2:30 p.m.

The Planning Commission reviews and makes recommendations to the Board for land use applications. The Commission's Land Use Meeting and Public Hearings are generally held on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month, beginning at 6 p.m.

In the interest of fairness to all citizens that wish to comment and otherwise provide public testimony, the Board of County Commissioners make the following requests:

1. Please sign in at the entrance to the hearing room to help us stay organized and efficient.
2. Before providing your comments, please state your first and last name, spell your last name, and provide your address.
3. Unless otherwise determined at a specific hearing, please keep your comments to less than three (3) minutes to ensure fairness and access to all who are interested in testifying. The Chair may extend the time limitation slightly for a group representative if s(he) believes the time limit is unfair to the group under the specific circumstances of the hearing.
4. Please direct your comments to Board of County Commissioners, as they are the decision-makers.
5. Commissioners must make decisions based on applicable legal criteria found in the County's land use regulations. Staff will display the criteria on the large screen in the hearing room during public testimony. Please keep comments germane to the criteria.
6. PowerPoint and other digital presentations are permitted. The presentation (including seven (7) paper copies) must be provided to staff at least 24 hours prior to the hearing. This allows time to screen the presentation for viruses and load it into the system, so it is ready to display during public testimony. Such presentations will be subject to the three-minute time limit. Speakers submitting documents during the hearing (seven copies are required) shall give them to County staff or the County Attorney. The documents will be catalogued for the record. If your written comments were submitted to staff prior to the hearing, no additional copies are needed.
7. Order shall be maintained, and outbursts will not be permitted. Displaying signs, circulating petitions, or distributing promotional material by the hearing room audience is not allowed. Speakers, please keep any signs in your lap or on the floor.

The format of land use meetings/public hearings:

1. Pledge of allegiance and administrative items to begin the hearing.
2. Staff will make a presentation regarding a pending application based on the application submitted and the applicable legal criteria for approval and Commissioners may ask questions.
3. The Applicant will have an opportunity to make a presentation, often with their experts, and the Commissioners may ask questions.
4. Individuals who have signed up to speak will be provided an opportunity to comment to the Commissioners regarding the application and criteria. After a final opportunity has been provided for anyone in the audience who wishes to speak, the Chair will close public testimony. The Applicant will be given an opportunity to respond to the public comments. Commissioners can then ask follow-up questions based on any information offered.
5. After all Commissioner questions have been answered, the Commissioners will discuss and deliberate. The Commissioners will then vote. An application that meets all legal criteria must be approved and an application that fails any of the criteria must be denied.