

the **Village of New Lenox** *"Home Of Proud Americans"*

PLAN COMMISSION AND ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS (ZBA) PROCEDURES

BEFORE THE HEARING

- The Village of New Lenox Zoning Ordinance requires that the applicant notify all property owners within 250 feet of the property in question of the public hearing to be held by the Plan Commission or ZBA. The notice does not require you to attend the public hearing; it is simply sent to make you aware of a potential land use change and offer you an opportunity to make your opinion known on the proposal.
- If you have any questions about an item on the agenda, feel free to contact the Community Development Department, at (815) 462-6490 prior to the hearing. Knowing the answers to some of your questions prior to the hearing may help you prepare your testimony.
- Plan your presentation. It is not necessary, but if you have handouts or a long document, you can save time by making it available to the Community Development Department, at least 7 days before the public hearing. This way it can be made available to the members of the Plan Commission or ZBA in their packets, which they read prior to the hearings. If you are not able to testify in person, you may submit your written opinion on the pending application to the Village Hall or fax it at (815) 462-6469.
- Sign the speaker list and fill out the individual speaker card at the back of the hearing room. Signing in makes the citizen a party of record and allows testimony to be given. It also gives the Chair some idea of how many people want to speak. The Recording Secretary will swear in everyone that intends to speak.

AT THE HEARING

- Before speaking, hand in your individual speaker card to the Recording Secretary. Speak only from the podium. Plan on introducing yourself, giving your name and address, and whether you are in favor or against the proposal. For example, "I'm John Doe, my address is 125 Cedar Road, New Lenox, IL 60451 and I approve of this proposal for the following reasons..." If you are officially representing a group such as a homeowner's association, please state that for the record as well.
- To ensure that everyone who wants to testify is able to do so, the Chair limits oral testimony to a reasonable time frame. Therefore, you should organize your comments so that your major points are clear and concise. You may want to make a statement such as "I agree with the previous speaker(s)," and then elaborate on any new information you want to provide. Another time saving measure is to mention that you represent others, and ask everyone in your group to be recognized by standing or raising their hand.
- Since the hearing is being audio recorded, and to ensure that you are adequately heard, please adjust the microphone to your height and speak directly into it.
- Anything submitted to the Plan Commission or ZBA for consideration, such as letters, plats, photographs, videotapes or petitions, becomes part of the public record and cannot be returned.

DECORUM

- The Planning Commission / ZBA understands that hearings about plans that could impact your property or way-of-life can be very emotional. However, a hearing should be a civil proceeding where it is inappropriate to cheer, boo, or applaud while a speaker has the floor. Also, please turn off all cell phones and pagers. Citizens of New Lenox will not always agree on an issue, but can make an effort to respect the public hearing process so that all viewpoints can be heard.
- All comments should be addressed to the Chair. A public hearing is not a question and answer period with the Plan Commission or ZBA. The Chair can direct the petitioner or Staff to respond to or clarify any questions or comments from the audience. The members of the audience do have the opportunity to cross-examine the expert witnesses with their own expert witnesses. Also, questioning and arguing between individuals in the audience are not only inappropriate, but are not an effective way to make a case to support your views on an issue.
- Please refrain from reading long documents that can just as easily be submitted in advance and made a part of the record. Summarize your comments whenever possible and avoid repeating prior testimony.