

Public Commenting Policy for Electronic / Remote Public Meetings

The following is an explanation of the procedures and requirements for making public comment during a remote public meeting as required by N.J.A.C. 5:391.4(h).

Mute yourself and turn off your camera upon entering the meeting. Please keep yourself muted until the meeting moderator requests that you unmute yourself. Additionally, members of the public should keep their cameras turned off until called on by the moderator to speak. This will reduce the number of video boxes appearing on screen and enable participants to more clearly see the person speaking.

Disruptive participants will be muted or removed. The Board reserves the right to mute or remove disruptive meeting participants after an initial warning. Disruptive conduct includes sustained inappropriate behaviors such as, but not necessarily limited to, shouting, interruption, and use of profanity.

Refrain from using the chat function. The chat function should only be used to alert the meeting moderator if you are having technical difficulties. Comments submitted via the chat function shall not be permitted (unless allowed by the Board where a participant is having technical difficulties and unable to verbally make a comment). Do NOT use the public chat function to chat with other participants. If you wish to chat with another participant, please use a private chat. In no event shall a member of the public privately chat with a member of the Board.

Public comments. If you wish to make a comment during remote public meeting, there are two ways to do so: in writing and during the meeting.

Written public comments will be accepted prior to the meeting. Comments from members of the public will be accepted in writing via email or mail. Written comments must be no more than 450 words and must include your name and address. The Board reserves the right not to accept written public comments if the commenter does not include such identifying information. The comment should indicate whether it is to be read during the general comment portion of the meeting or during the comment period associated with a certain development application. Such comments will be read into the record at the appropriate time and made part of the minutes. However, please be advised that the Board reserves the right to summarize duplicative comments consistent with N.J.A.C. 5:391.4(f). If a public hearing on an application does not reach the public comment portion, all written comments received will be held until the following meeting.

Comments can be emailed by 3:00 p.m. the day of the meeting to: planningboard@westamwelltp.org. The subject line should read: "Planning Board Public Comment." Comments emailed to any other address will not be accepted as public comments.

Written comments may also be submitted via mail or dropped off at the municipal building by such date and time, subject to the same requirements as emailed comments.

Public comments can also be made live at the meeting. If you are utilizing a computer to participate, click the "Raise Hand" button on the bottom of the screen. This will place you in a queue that the moderator can see for when it is time to take public comments.

If you are dialing in on your phone, to avoid having your phone number displayed on the screen, first dial *67, then the meeting phone number, followed by the meeting identification number. Your phone number will not be displayed. To "raise your hand" dial *9 to be placed in the queue. You will hear a prompt to unmute yourself. Press *6 to unmute yourself.

Please do not begin to speak until the moderator has called on you. People are sorted in the order they raised their hands. When the moderator calls on you, a message will pop-up asking if you want to unmute yourself. If you choose to move forward and place a public comment or question on the record, choose to unmute, if you have changed your mind then choose deny. Please state your name and address before beginning your comment. Please make sure there is no background noise such as the TV on, music or loud chatter.

Exhibits may be presented. If you intend to utilize an exhibit during a public comment, please forward such exhibit to the Board at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. All applicants and members of the public shall be responsible for sharing their exhibits to the screen.

Display Names. In order to prevent "zoom bombing," please be advised that the meeting moderator may not call on you to comment if your Zoom display name contains profanity, is meant to insult or defame Board members or another Township employee or representative, or is an attempt to impersonate another person or conceal the participant's identity. Your Zoom display name can be easily changed during a meeting. Hover over your name in the "participants list" and click on "rename."