

Re: Face to Face Meeting

Land Use <landuse@salisburyct.us>

Tue 9/17/2024 10:05 AM

To: Barbara Hockstader <bhockstader@gmail.com>

Good Morning Barbara,

It is not legally possible for us to "change" the location of the meeting as the hearing was noticed as being continued via Zoom.

The Commission has chosen to conduct business remotely for a multitude of reasons but primarily with the objectives to improve access, provide transparency, ensure integrity in process, and guarantee maximum Commission member participation. We simply do not have the staff to carry out so many 2+hour-long meetings in-person or to execute the logistics of hybrid meetings. The PZC alone is holding four meetings in the month of September (The Land Use Office is responsible for four Commissions).

In 2022, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) statute was amended to allow a board to hold (**if the board so chooses**) meetings that are accessible to the public through 1) electronic equipment only (i.e., **remote meetings**) or 2) remote participation in conjunction with an in-person meeting (i.e., **hybrid meetings**). The technology must "facilitate real-time public access to meetings," such as "telephonic, video or other conferencing platforms."

While we have provided Zoom video access to remote meetings, an audio-only option is also permissible. Meaning that the public doesn't have to be able to see the Commission or the audience.

If a board conducts a remote meeting it must 1) provide any member of the public (upon a written request at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting) with a physical location and electronic equipment necessary to attend the meeting in real-time, 2) record or transcribe the meeting. We record the meetings and post them on the website no later than seven days after the meeting (Typically, within a day or two). Note that, the first requirement is only to provide real-time public access to the meeting and it does not require that the Commission itself be in-person.

The Commission has conducted all of their regular business in exclusively remote format for the past four years. There are several positive aspects of this format over in-person (face to face). We have found that remote meetings

1. improve transparency of Commission business and in many cases has improved Commission and public participation
2. facilitate Commission attendance - just recently we had a Commission member participate while overseas for a family emergency.
3. are favored by many residents and professionals who are able to watch the quality recordings after the fact and participate even when they have to be in two "places" at the same time.
4. keep Commission members better informed of what transpired at meetings if they are absent.
5. have been carried out despite forecasted inclement weather or Commission member illness
6. better maintain order and minimize disorderly interruptions by those in attendance
7. reduce opportunities for ex-parte interactions (illegal conversations before and after meetings)
8. allow people to tune in to only those agenda items they wish to attend

I have included this correspondence in the record for the meeting on Tuesday. Per Statute, the decision to hold a meeting remotely is up to the Commission. They must be fair to not only the public but also the applicant.

Respectfully,

Abby

From: Barbara Hockstader <bhockstader@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 17, 2024 7:34 AM

To: Land Use <landuse@salisburyct.us>

Subject: Face to Face Meeting

Good Morning,

I am wondering if you can help me with the process of securing a face to face meeting for tonight's Special Meeting on the Wake Robin Inn Project. I know that several neighbors have inquired and I've sent an email but we haven't heard how to make this happen.

I was told that it might be inconvenient for a few of the Land Use Committee members. Could we schedule this meeting for a time that is convenient for you in person? The residents of the community are extremely interested in being able to convene as a community. Please help us make that happen in a way that also works for your schedules.

Best,
Barbara