

# Town of Salem, New Hampshire

Community Development Department

Planning Division

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## **The Planning Board Development Review Process: An Abutter's Guide**

This guide has been prepared to explain what you, as an abutter to a proposed development project, can expect during the plan review process. According to New Hampshire law, an abutter to a project is any landowner whose property directly abuts the subject parcel or is across the street or stream. Abutters are identified based on the most recent Town Assessor's records.

This document is not intended to be a legal guide, but it can help you understand how to participate in a public hearing, get information, and best communicate any concerns you may have. To contact the Planning Board, please write, email, or call the Planning Division.

### **Why are You Receiving a Legal Notice?**

You are receiving this hearing notice because you are an abutter (as defined by law) to a proposed development that will be reviewed by the Salem Planning Board. The notice is required to tell you that a public hearing is being held on a proposed project. If additional meetings beyond the dates listed in your notice are necessary, you will receive an additional notice.

### **What is the Planning Board?**

The Planning Board consists of seven residents of the community. The Board has the responsibility to review proposed development projects and make decisions on them in accordance with State and local laws. The Board meets at 7:00 pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at Town Hall. Board members are elected and are assisted by the Town's Planning Director.

### **How Can You Find Out More About the Proposed Project?**

Applications, plans and supporting materials are kept on file at the Planning Division. You are welcome to review this information and may pay for copies of any information you would like to keep. Minutes of the Planning Board meetings are available to view at Town Hall and on the Town of Salem website ([www.townofsalemnh.org](http://www.townofsalemnh.org)).

### **What Happens at the Public Hearing?**

At the first hearing, the applicant will present plans and explain what is proposed for the Board and the audience. The Board will ask questions where clarification is needed. There will be an opportunity for those in the audience to ask questions or offer opinions. Comments may also be submitted in writing. Occasionally, for simple projects, hearings can be completed in one night. More often, hearings will be continued so that the applicant can make revisions to the plans or provide additional information. Continued hearings may be several weeks or months in the future depending on how long it takes the applicant to gather the required information. To verify that a hearing is being held on a scheduled date, call the Planning Division.

### **How Can I Make My Concerns Known if I Cannot Attend the Public Hearing?**

Comments can be submitted in writing prior to the public hearing. Copies of all correspondence will be provided to the Board members. Meetings are televised on local cable TV channel 23 and can be watched at [www.sgc23.com](http://www.sgc23.com).

### **What Happens After the Hearing?**

The Board either approves a plan with conditions or denies it if the plan does not meet Town and State requirements.

### **What Issues Does the Board Consider?**

The scope of issues that the Board can consider in reviewing projects is defined by State and Town laws and regulations. You can view the Town's land use regulations (Zoning Ordinance, Site Plan Review and Subdivision Regulations) and [www.townofsalemnh.org](http://www.townofsalemnh.org). In presenting testimony (oral or written), it is most helpful to focus on these issues.

### **Will I Be Notified of the Decision?**

Copies of decisions are not sent to abutters. You may request a copy of any decision from the Planning Division.

### **How Can I Appeal?**

Appeals may be made to Rockingham County Superior Court within 30 days of the Planning Board decision.