

SUMMARY OF ZONING HEARING BOARD PROCESS

The Zoning Ordinance is written and approved by the Board of Supervisors. The Zoning Hearing Board is a group of your neighbors that are appointed by the Board of Supervisors and volunteer their time.

The primary role of the Zoning Hearing Board is to adjudicate appeals by landowners and to act on requests for variances and special exceptions concerning specific zoning requirements for specific plots of land. Variances require a property owner to establish undue hardship related to conditions on the land or hardship created by the Zoning Ordinance. The ZHB Solicitor aids the Board in understanding the law and in helping to run the judicial process but does not vote on the outcome.

The Applicant and the Board of Supervisors are parties to all Zoning Hearing Board cases.

In addition to these two parties, neighbors that are impacted to a greater degree than the average township resident may also ask to become parties, which if approved, gives them the right to cross examine Applicant's witnesses after their testimony and to present witnesses of their own. When all parties are done presenting their cases, each party and attendee to the hearing will have the chance to make comments. There is no need to be a party to give comments.

At the completion of this process, the Zoning Hearing Board will make a decision to either grant or deny the request for a variance or special exception. In either case, if approved, the Zoning Hearing Board can impose binding conditions on the applicant in order for them to take advantage of the variance or special exception granted.

Any party who disagrees with the ZHB's decision, may appeal that decision to the Court of Common Pleas.

It is requested that persons attending a Zoning Hearing Board hearing remain silent until it is their turn to speak, so the court stenographer is able to transcribe the discussion. It is also requested that the guidance and instructions of our solicitor be followed. If anyone wants to discuss the case among themselves, they should leave the hearing room.

Hearings generally adjourn about 10:30 p.m. If the case is not done at that time and will not be done shortly thereafter, it will likely be continued to a future date.