

# Important Information for Public Hearing Participants

## City of North Oaks

If you've received this, you've received notice of (or are at) a public hearing. Public input is a very important component of the Commission/Council decision-making process. Your attendance is appreciated and encouraged! The following information is provided to guide you through the public hearing process.

### 1. WHAT IS THE PLANNING COMMISSION?

The North Oaks Planning Commission is an **advisory** board to the City Council on planning and land use issues. The six volunteer members are appointed and serve with one member of the City Council. The Commission is responsible for advising the City Council on planning and land use issues, as well as conducting **public hearings** to obtain citizen input. While their recommendation provides the Council with guidance, the final decision making authority on all matters lies with the North Oaks City Council.

### 2. WHAT IS A PUBLIC HEARING?

A public hearing is a special meeting which allows the public to comment on proposed plans and projects before officials make a final decision. Citizens are given an opportunity to hear a presentation, ask questions, and make comments regarding a specific topic. All members of the public are welcome to testify, but should prepare their testimony in advance of the hearing in order to ensure their points are clearly understandable for the official(s) conducting the hearing<sup>1</sup>. Citizens may also submit comments in writing prior to the meeting<sup>2</sup>. All written comments will become part of the public record.

### 3. HOW WAS THE PUBLIC HEARING ANNOUNCED?

- a. Notice was published in the Shoreview Press, the official City newspaper, as required by law; and
- b. Written notice was mailed to adjacent property owners within a specific distance of the subject property based on code and statutory requirements.<sup>3</sup>

### 4. HOW WILL THE ITEM BE REVIEWED?

The Planning Commission may be reviewing multiple items at any given meeting, but public hearings generally receive priority and are reviewed first.

- a. The Commission Chair will introduce the agenda item, and request staff's presentation;
- b. City Staff will present reports, analysis, and findings for consideration;
- c. The applicant(s) will be provided an opportunity to comment on staff's report, and provide additional information for consideration;
- d. The Commission Chair will open the public hearing for public comment and questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that speakers may be asked to keep their testimony under three minutes in length if deemed necessary by the presiding official.

<sup>2</sup> Written comments must be received by City Hall at least five days prior to the scheduled public hearing. Written comments received after this deadline will be distributed to the Planning Commission on the night of the meeting.

<sup>3</sup> Notice may have been sent to additional properties based on state law requirements or at staff discretion.

5. THE PROCEDURE FOR SPEAKING AT THE HEARING IS AS FOLLOWS:

When the public hearing is called to order, one speaker at a time may approach the speaker's podium to provide comment. There is no official order for speakers, so please be courteous to your fellow citizens and take turns providing comment. Once at the podium, **begin by stating your Name and Address for the record**, and then provide your comments. Speak clearly so that all may benefit from your remarks;

Please Note:

- No one may speak a second time until all others have had an opportunity to address the Commission.
- State your name and address prior to your comments each time you speak.
- The Commissioners and applicant will not engage in debate with anyone testifying at the public hearing. Normally, all questions raised during the course of a public hearing will be held to the end of the hearing, after which staff and/or the applicant will be asked to respond.
- The Planning Commission Chair may limit speaker time if there are a large number of persons wishing to speak. Standard practice could be to limit comments to two minutes per speaker.

6. PLANNING COMMISSION CONSIDERATION:

After listening to testimony from City Staff, the applicant, and citizens, the Planning Commission will formulate a recommendation to pass on to the City Council. Regardless of the recommendation, the City Council holds the ultimate authority to make the final decision.

Following Planning Commission action, City Staff will prepare a revised report for the City Council which reflects the feedback obtained during the planning commission review.

7. CITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION:

The City Council generally meets on the second Thursday of every month. To find out when your item of interest is scheduled, you may:

- a. Contact City Hall at 651-792-7750
- b. Check the City Council agenda or the meeting and events calendar on the homepage of the City's website: [www.cityofnorthoaks.com](http://www.cityofnorthoaks.com)

The City Council will not normally hold another public hearing, but they may offer an informal opportunity for the public to provide new information.

8. INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE!

Copies of plans and application materials are public information and are available for review at City Hall. Staff reports prepared for the Commission and Council meetings are normally not available until the Friday afternoon preceding the scheduled meeting. Please watch our website at [www.cityofnorthoaks.com](http://www.cityofnorthoaks.com) for any date changes.

**Questions?** Please contact Mike Robertson, City Administrator, at [mrobertson@cityofnorthoaks.com](mailto:mrobertson@cityofnorthoaks.com) or 651-792-7750