

Planning Commission Public Meeting Policy and Procedures

- Adopted by resolution 6 Aug 2013 -

Policy: The Planning Commission of Harpers Ferry seeks frequent, effective and meaningful public participation with as much awareness of the Commissions activities as possible and practical. The Commission aims to follow the intent and all requirements of WV State Code in the conduct of its business and meetings. In particular, the Commission will meet or exceed the intent and requirements of the WV Open Meetings Act. This statement of policy formalizes our approach in recent years.

Procedures

All **regular meetings** will be noticed as required with a posted agenda. Before the meeting begins formally, we offer an informal discussion opportunity for the public to ask about their concepts for a project prior to submission of an application. A formal public comment period will be included in the agenda for comments on the pending agenda items and again for project plans prior to application submission to capture any formal deliberations on these. All **Public Hearings** and any **Special meetings** of the Commission for deliberation and decisions by the Commission will also be noticed and will contain an opportunity for public comment on agenda items. A quorum is required for all regular and special meetings but not for a hearing unless deliberation and decision on some action of the Commission are on its agenda. Minutes will be taken and made available publicly for these events.

The Commission will encourage public participation in its deliberations and meetings by also scheduling "**Public WorkShops**" when the topics are of possibly large and significant impact on the Town, our residents or business owners/operators. This is not a substitute for a Public Hearing and, in fact, will be undertaken in addition to State code requirements for Public Hearings, if any. We believe this workshop format gives greater opportunity for fruitful dialog among participants and with the Commission. These Workshops will be noticed as done for regular Commission meetings and, if timing allows, also indicated on the Town website and newsletter. Minutes will be taken as deemed necessary.

From time to time a subgroup of Commission Members, often together with other volunteers, will gather as a **working group** to perform analyses, prepare draft documents, or other activities in preparation for full Commission deliberation and action at a later public meeting. These activities are in the nature of work expected from a Town staff, if we had one. So long as a quorum of the Commission does not attend such a gathering and there is no intent to enter into a deliberation or to enter into action on a Commission decision, these meetings will not be noticed beyond posting on the online Town calendar and will be held at the mutual convenience of the attendees. During such gatherings, no Commission decisions will be taken nor deliberation begun. The public may attend, but may only observe and will not be entitled to copies of working materials from this gathering unless invited to speak or to be given documents. Minutes will not be kept for these working sessions.