

# Virtual Neighborhood Meeting Guidelines

## A. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline requirements for holding virtual neighborhood meetings that fulfill the Neighborhood Meeting requirement pursuant to UDO 3.2.3. The procedure outlined here is to be used during times when in-person meetings are not permitted because of an emergency declaration.

*In addition to the virtual meeting requirements outlined here, a standard in-person Neighborhood Meeting shall be required prior to an item moving to public hearing before the Planning Commission, City Council, Board of County Commissioners, or Board of Adjustment. The Planning Director, on a case-by-case basis, may determine that an in-person meeting is not required. Considerations for the decision to require an additional in-person meeting may include: length of delay caused by ongoing emergency declarations, amount of public interest expressed during the virtual neighborhood meeting and afterwards, and any other pertinent information that would show that a particular project warrants an in-person neighborhood meeting prior to public hearings or approval.*

## B. Applicability

As set forth in Section 3.2.3.A. of the UDO, all applicants shall hold a neighborhood meeting prior to submitting an application, but after a pre-application conference, for the following development applications:

1. Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan;
2. Zoning map changes that require a TIA pursuant to Sec. 3.3, Traffic Impact Analysis;
3. Conservation Subdivision; and
4. Other applications as may be specified elsewhere in the City-County Unified Development Ordinance

## C. Time and Location of the Meeting

1. During emergency declarations that prohibit or limit in-person gatherings, a virtual neighborhood meeting must be held using an interactive online video conferencing software such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, WebEx, or other similar platforms as approved by the Planning Director.
2. As some members of the public do not have internet access or are otherwise unable to access digital platforms, the meeting platform must have the ability for attendees to call into the conference using a telephone. If a platform can only be accessed via the internet, it cannot be used to hold the virtual meeting.
3. Those who access the meeting via telephone must be given the same information, graphics, maps, and any other pertinent information as those accessing the meeting via the internet. If the applicant intends to screenshare presentation slides or graphics during the video conference, that material must be included in hardcopy format in the virtual meeting notification packet.

4. The meeting shall begin no earlier than 6:00 PM and no later than 8:00 PM on a weekday or no earlier than 10:00 AM and no later than 7:00 PM on a weekend. The meeting shall not be on a holiday, a holiday weekend, or the day before a holiday or holiday weekend. A holiday is defined as legal holidays recognized by the City of Durham and/or Durham County.
5. The meeting itself must be open and available for a minimum of two hours, regardless of the number of participants that attend.

## D. Notice of Meeting – Virtual Meeting Notification Packet

As specified in Section 3.2.3.C. of the UDO, the applicant shall provide notice by first class mail, at least ten days prior to the date of the neighborhood meeting, to each owner of record of any land within 600 feet of the property for which the development approvals are sought. The notice shall include at a minimum the following:

1. The applicant's name, telephone number, and email address;
2. The name, telephone number, and email address of a contact dedicated to providing technical support to attendees before and during the virtual meeting.
  - a. To minimize interruptions, it is recommended that the technical support contact be different from the applicant or the person primarily responsible for running the presentation;
3. The street address of the site with an identification map;
4. A clear explanation of what the applicant is proposing;
5. The time and date of the virtual meeting;
6. A clear explanation that the meeting can be accessed by calling a telephone number if an attendee is unable to access the meeting via the internet, and instructions on how to do so;
7. A phone number to allow attendees to call into the virtual meeting platform;
8. A URL to allow attendees to access the online platform that is hosting the virtual meeting; and
9. Paper copies (in color) of any maps, plots, slides, or graphics that will be presented by the applicant by video during the virtual neighborhood meeting.

## E. Procedures

### 1. Pre-Meeting

The applicant shall provide the Planning Department the information to access the meeting, and a copy of the notification letter and materials, at least two weeks before the scheduled meeting so that it can be shared in the weekly email newsletter published by the Planning Department.

### 2. Meeting

- a. The applicant shall conduct the meeting and provide necessary information and materials to attendees including, but not limited to:
  - i. Details about what is being proposed;
  - ii. The type of approval process that is involved with the proposal; and
  - iii. How the neighborhood will be kept informed during the process;
- b. The applicant shall provide an opportunity for each attendee to ask questions and voice concerns about the proposal. This includes attendees that are accessing the meeting via telephone, audio, or text via the online platform.

- c. The Planning Director may designate staff to attend the meeting to observe and answer any procedural questions.

### **3. Post Meeting**

The applicant shall provide the following materials with the submitted application:

- a. A list of names and addresses of attendees. The applicant must create an attendance list by having each attendee verbally introduce themselves when they join the meeting;
- b. A summary of the issues raised by the attendees;
- c. As part of the submittal, the applicant should describe how the proposal addresses the issues raised at the meeting;
- d. A copy of the meeting notification;
- e. A list of who was notified of the meeting;
- f. A copy of all materials distributed or presented at the meeting;
- g. A copy of any text submitted to the applicant via the online platform. For verbal comments from attendees, a summary per item b. shall suffice; and
- h. An audio recording of the full duration of the meeting.

## **F. Additional Meetings**

The Planning Director may require that additional neighborhood meetings be held if the application is substantially modified from what was presented at the previous neighborhood meeting.