

Virtual Public Involvement: A Municipal Perspective

May 6, 2020





"The term "essential" challenges me because I believe what local governments do for their communities is essential, but we know health and safety must come first during a pandemic. Don't let a label keep you from adding value because that is always essential."

-Julia D. Novak

VPI Municipal Applications

Pre COVID19

- Meeting Agendas
- Resident via IQM2
- Complaints via SeeClickFix and Seamless Documents
- Reverse 911
- Everbridge
 Emergency Alerts
- Social Media
- Capital Projects / Webpages
- Planning Studies

<u>COVID19</u>

- Pre COVID19 List +
- Council Meetings
- MLUL Meetings
- Meet the Mayor
- Board and Committee Meetings
- Pre/Construction Meetings
- FaceTime Building Inspections

Capital Improvements and Planning Studies

- Tools to provide information
 - Webpage
 - Facebook, Twitter, Next Door
 - Tools to gather feedback
 - See Click Fix
 - Seamless Documents
 - Wikimaps
 - Survey Monkey

Do you feel that crossing a roadway with an exclusive pedestrian phase (EPP) is safer than one with a lead pedestrian interval (LPI) ?

Answered: 402 Skipped: 1 First: 6/10/2019 Zoom: Apr 2019 to Jan 2020





COVID19 Bid Openings

- Bid distribution
 - In-person review / distribution of documents by appointment only
 - Online project software
- Bid delivery use on-site drop box or mail
 - Consider certified mail if USPS is inconsistent
- Addenda to be faxed and posted on website
- Bid Opening
 - In person bid opening in front of municipal building
 - Limited to 10 people max, first come first served, 1 rep per company
 - Social distance / masks / gloves
 - Zoom bid opening
 - In person bid review is not allowed
 - Scanned copies will be emailed upon request

COVID19 Council Meetings

- Plan and practice, then repeat!
- Zoom is a popular platform among many options
 - Use the Webinar platform
- Identify a host (other than the Chair) to manage the platform
 - Establish a special email address for comments (disable the chat feature)
- Use the waiting room feature
- Livestream meeting on YouTube (replaces the live feed on Community TV Channel)
- Provide phone access
- Provide more than 1 public comment period
- Utilize share screen feature



COVID19 Planning and Zoning Meetings

- Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) Requirements and Deadlines must be met
- Familiarize your board members with the technology
- Creation of a permanent digital file to replace in-person file review
 - Website storage capacity
 - Size of files for downloads and viewing
 - Requirement for access to technology
 - Redactions of private information
- Printing service for paper copies







"The Division strives to help all local governments achieve excellence, efficiency, and long-term fiscal stability in their operations"

DIVISION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES (DLGS)

Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustments Operational Guidance - COVID-19: N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 Recommendations for Land Use Public Meetings in New Jersey

The Division of Local Government Services issues this guidance document to ensure continuity of Land Use application procedures while New Jersey's Executive Order 103 and Executive Order 107 are in effect, to ensure due process is afforded during Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment hearings and to remind local units to adhere to appropriate social distancing and health measures as they implement this process. There are many options available to Planning Boards and Zoning Boards of Adjustment to facilitate virtual and telephonic public meetings. Planning Boards and Zoning Boards of Adjustment are also reminded of their continuing obligation to comply with N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 (the "Open Public Meetings Act," or "Act"); please consult the Division's <u>Guidance for Remote Public Meetings</u> for further discussion on specific means of conducting electronic meetings in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

N.J.S.A. 40:55D-9 governs the meetings of municipal agencies. It requires, in short, that every municipal agency must have regular, at least monthly, public meetings, and they may have special meetings, as appropriate. All business must be conducted with a quorum; action must be taken in accordance with a majority vote, except as otherwise specified within the governing statutes; and minutes must be prepared and made available to the public.

Every Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment is required to grant or deny approval of applications pending before it within prescribed times, or within a further time as may be consented to by the Applicant. If the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustment does not

Municipal VPI Resources







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SJ Resources

- Running Effective Virtual Meetings webinar and post meeting document: <u>https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wM0Uq0VyjJSbTb3jZL0H7CanIdl</u> <u>89LV5S2creaAjg9U/edit#</u>
- Free technical assistance
- Public Information and Engagement Catalog <u>https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1jQFnjFlZYS1MiQxDrjB1no3tN</u> <u>dMloupu11cAu_IMc6Q/edit#gid=948765804</u>
- NJLM COVID Resource
- NJSME Chat Platform

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