



Southeastern Connecticut
Council of Governments

Commissioner Training Quick Reference Guide #2: *Public Hearing Procedures*

- Public hearings are required in certain situations, based on state statute and local regulations.
- Public hearings give a fair hearing to applicants, and allow for the public to voice their opinions to municipal commissions.

Timeframes

- **Date of Receipt:** 35 days from when the application is submitted, or the date of the next regularly scheduled commission meeting, whichever is sooner.
- **Time to Open a Public Hearing:** 65 days from the Date of Receipt.
- **Time to Close a Public Hearing:** 35 days from the date the hearing was opened.
- **Time to Render a Decision:** 65 days from the close of the hearing (35 days for Wetlands Commissions).
- **Extensions:** The applicant may request that any of these time periods be extended, but extensions cannot exceed 65 days in total. The 65 days can be divided between the three time periods (not the date of receipt).

Notice Requirements

- **Newspaper:** CT State Statute requires that notice of public hearings be posted in a newspaper twice, once between 10 and 15 days before a hearing, and once between 2 and 10 days before a hearing. The notices must be at least 2 days apart.
- **Other Notices:** Your regulations may require other forms of notice, like signs on the property or letters being mailed to neighboring property owners.

Hearing Conduct

- A motion is required to open the hearing.
- Once the hearing is open, the applicant or their representative will present the application.
- The Commission can then ask questions of the applicant.
- Following the Commission questions, all members of the public must be allowed to speak if they would like, either in support of or against the application. They can also ask questions (they should pose the questions to the Chair, who can then ask the applicant).
- Following applicant and public input, the Commission can close the hearing or continue it until the next meeting, if more information is needed. Both actions require motions.
- Once the hearing is closed, the Commission can make a motion and then deliberate on whether or not to approve the application. **Remember**, unseated alternates should not participate in deliberations.
- Once a hearing is closed, the Commission should not accept any new information from applicants or the public.