



BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS PRESENTATION SUGGESTIONS

CITY OF RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

When presenting your request for a variance or exception to the Board of Zoning Appeals, it is important that you consider the points outlined below. The City Charter requires that every decision of the Board must be based upon a finding of fact that the Board must determine from sworn testimony, together with pertinent evidence, presented at its public hearing. It is essential that the Board receive thorough and complete information in order for it to adequately consider your case and make an informed decision.

1. The powers and duties of the Board of Zoning Appeals are specified in Section 17.20 of the City Charter and Article X, Division 5, of the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Office will assist you in identifying how your case should be filed. If you have questions regarding your case filing, please contact the Zoning Administration Office (646-6340/6701). Please review the applicable provisions of the City Charter or the Zoning Ordinance thoroughly and address them when presenting your case to the Board to show that the applicable requirements have been satisfied.
2. The Board of Zoning Appeals is a quasi-judicial board whose decisions are controlled by statutory law and also take into consideration applicable case law that has been handed down by the Richmond Circuit Court and the Virginia Supreme Court. The Board suggests that if you have any legal questions regarding statutory or case law as it may apply to your application, that those legal issues should be discussed with an attorney before you make your final decision to submit an application to the Board.
3. The Board considers it absolutely essential that you discuss your case with your neighbors (notification letters are sent to property owners within a 150-foot radius of your property) as well as your neighborhood association(s). Information regarding your neighborhood association(s) and/or contact person(s) may be obtained from the City's website at <http://www.richmondgov.com/PlanningAndDevelopmentReview/civicasociationgroupinformation.aspx> Once on the page, you can search for your property using the interactive map. A dialogue box will provide you with the names of all civic groups within which your property may lie. Once you have those group names, scroll down the page to the appropriate group(s) to find the contact information for each.
4. **Please be advised that if you fail to discuss your request with your neighbors and neighborhood association(s), you should anticipate that your case will be continued until the Board's next regularly scheduled meeting. It is highly recommended that you contact your neighborhood association as soon as possible to determine their meeting schedule in order to be sure you allow yourself enough time to talk to all concerned parties prior to the hearing before the Board. The Board's Rules of Procedure require payment of a \$150.00 continuance fee if the applicant must request a continuance for the reason that the applicant failed to discuss their case with their neighbor(s) or neighborhood association(s).**
4. **You are also strongly encouraged to discuss your pending case with the Secretary of the Board, Roy Benbow (804-240-2124) well before the hearing.** The Secretary can be helpful by explaining the BZA public hearing process.
5. Utilizing photographs, plans, maps, diagrams and such other written or graphic evidence as needed to fully explain your request can be a great help to the Board in understanding your request and thereby improve your chances for success. Remember a picture is worth a thousand words.
6. Note that, although the Board is not authorized to grant a waiver from the zoning regulations based on financial circumstances alone, it may be a factor to be taken into consideration along with other facts in a case. If your case involves such a factor, please provide the Board with complete and relevant financial information for its review.
7. The Board's hearings are informal, although all testimony is taken under oath. You are not required to be represented by an attorney in presenting your case. However, if you choose, you may have legal representation and/or may utilize such technical experts or other persons to testify on your behalf as you feel are needed to adequately explain your request to the Board.

Acknowledgement of Receipt by Applicant or Authorized Agent: _____.