

Public Hearings



If you have questions...

call the

**Klickitat County Planning Department
(509) 773-5703**

**493-6084 (from White Salmon)
or come by the Courthouse Annex 1
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

KLICKITAT COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
COURTHOUSE ANNEX
228 WEST MAIN, MS: CH-17
GOLDENDALE, WA 98620
PHONE: (509) 773-5703
1 800 765-7239

CALLING FROM WHITE SALMON 493-6084
FAX: (509) 773-6206

IF YOUR PROPERTY IS LOCATED IN THE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA,
THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE COMMISSION REQUIRES YOU TO
COMPLY WITH ALL NATIONAL SCENIC AREA REGULATIONS. THEY
CAN BE CONTACTED AT 509 493-3323



**This brochure explains what a
PUBLIC HEARING is, what
happens, and how to testify
effectively.**

**This brochure contains general information
only and is subject to periodic change.
Contact the Planning Department for specific
details regarding current information.**

February 2010

What is a Public Hearing?

Public Hearings provide an opportunity for any person interested in a project or a proposed code amendment to testify for or against the proposal or simply state concerns that they have with the proposal. Public hearings are held on many land use permit applications and all proposed amendments to County land use codes, whether they are initiated by a citizen or legislatively.

How do I testify?

Prepare ahead of time for your testimony! The most effective testimony is given by the person who has read all the material in the project file as well as the County Codes that affect the project and is able to make their comments in this framework. A hearing body will make its determination on a proposal based on *adopted* criteria and codes. To testify effectively, you should know and understand the criteria for approval since comments on this criteria usually has the most impact

The applicant will receive a copy of the staff report for the project approximately 10 days prior to the hearing date.

At the very minimum, you should review the staff analysis of the project in order to understand the important points raised during review of the proposal. Interested parties of the project may request copies of the reports and other information at the cost of 15 cents a page.

The least effective type of testimony is composed of personal statements or the contention that the proposal will have negative economic impacts or will compete with existing businesses. Once again, the hearing body is limited in their deliberation to adopted county codes, which currently do not address the above issues.

Remember, if you are concerned with a proposal that will impact your neighborhood, you owe it to yourself to make your testimony at the public hearing as effective as possible. A little time spent reviewing the file will go a long way in presenting effective testimony.

What are the rules of a Public Hearing?

Anyone may attend a public hearing and may *speak in accordance with the rules of the hearing body*. This means that, in some cases, testimony may be limited to a set time period.

Normally, in any public hearing on a permit application, the staff will present background information and the staff report first, the applicant will then make their presentation, the hearing will then be opened to anyone wishing to speak in favor of the application and then to anyone wishing to speak in opposition to the project. Lastly, the applicant has the right to rebut any testimony given during the hearing.

The hearing body has the right to ask questions of anyone at any time, even after the public hearing portion of the meeting has been closed. No new testimony outside of specific answers to questions by the hearing body can be accepted by the body after the public hearing has been closed.

Who acts on the item after the hearing?

In Klickitat County, there are two citizens bodies that take action on various permit applications and code revisions: The Board of Adjustment, and the Planning Commission as the advisory body to the Klickitat County Board of Commissioners. These bodies are made up of citizens who are appointed by the Klickitat County Board of County Commissioners. The members are not paid, but instead freely

contribute their time and effort to serve Klickitat County.

How do I know when a public hearing is scheduled that will affect me?

Klickitat County is required to advertise public hearings in order to give interested parties an opportunity to attend the hearing. The required notice varies by the type of permit or legislation being considered but will always include a legal notice published in the Goldendale Sentinel and the Enterprise at least 10 days prior to the hearing. Other methods used to advertise hearings include posting the property and mailing notices to all property owners within 300 feet of the subject site.

Although the County takes measures to notify all potential interested parties of the hearings by the above methods, it is the responsibility of the property owner to be aware of the events that may affect his property. Therefore, it is important to read the legal notice section of the *Goldendale Sentinel* and *White Salmon Enterprise* every week. Public Hearing notices are posted on the County Website at www.klickitatcounty.org