



**GEM COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
DEPARTMENT
109 SO. MCKINLEY AVENUE
EMMETT, IDAHO 83617
208-365-5144**

**HOW TO PROVIDE LAND USE PUBLIC HEARING
TESTIMONY FOR GEM COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION AND THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS**

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. Any person needing special accommodations to participate in the noticed meeting should contact the Gem County Development Services Office at 208-365-5144 prior to the meeting.

Planning and Zoning Commission meetings are held on the third floor of the Gem County Courthouse, located at 415 E. Main Street, Emmett, Idaho.

Board of County Commissioners meetings are generally held on the second floor of the Gem County Courthouse, located at 415 E. Main Street, Emmett, Idaho.

STEPS TO FOLLOW WHEN TESTIFYING AT PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Sign – In Sheet:

Print your name and address on the sign-in sheet when entering the room if you wish to speak during the hearing.

2. Be Courteous:

This is a public meeting where there may be a diversity of viewpoints. Clapping or noise in support or in opposition to an individual's testimony is not allowed.

3. Be Informed:

Prior to planning your testimony, read staff reports, attend meetings held by neighborhood associations, developers, etc.

4. Time Saving Steps:

Often there are a large number of individuals planning to testify at a public hearing. To be able to accommodate everyone and get the public hearing completed in a timely manner, please do the following:

- a. Move to the front of the room and be prepared to approach the podium when your name is called.
- b. Please limit your testimony to 3 minutes. You may be timed.

5. State Name and Address:

Idaho State Law requires that during the public hearing when it is your turn to testify, you need to clearly state your name and address for the record prior to stating your comments.

6. Hearing Decisions:

The primary basis for any land use decision is the set of required findings set forth in the Gem County Code. These findings vary with each type of application. Public testimony is very important to help the Commission or Board determine if the findings can be met.

7. Remember Your Objective:

Usually, this objective is to persuade the Commission or Board members that the adopted statutes and ordinances favor your side of the issue. Be specific. Public comment is usually limited to three minutes per individual. Some additional time may be granted if a spokesperson is selected to represent several individuals.

8. Be Reasonable:

The Commission and Board must balance all views, interests, ordinances and proposals, in the attempt to determine the best course for serving the overall public good. While it is your obligation to present your own facts and interests, remember that most issues have at least two sides. Be prepared to compromise.

9. Ex Parte' Contact:

If the hearing involves a specific property, please do not try to contact any of the P&Z Commissioners or Board of County Commissioners. This contact is not allowed by Idaho Statute and may jeopardize the hearing.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: If I have not added my name to the sign-in sheet, will I still be able to provide testimony?

A: Yes. When those individuals who have signed up to testify have finished, the Chairman will ask if there is anyone else that would like to testify. At that time you may raise your hand, stand up, and move toward the podium.

Q: In lieu of verbal testimony, will written testimony be accepted?

A: Yes. Written testimony must be received by Gem County Development Services Department at least one week prior to the public hearing.

Q: If I provide hard copy information to the Commissioners during my testimony, will I get it back?

A: Anything you submit becomes part of the public record and cannot be returned to you, including photos, brochures, etc.

Q: What time will the issue be heard that I want to provide testimony for?

A: Staff is unable to provide exact times. It is recommended that you arrive when the meeting starts.

Q: Will the Commissioners make their decision at the meeting?

A: The Commissioners attempt to take testimony and make a decision at the meeting. However, there may be times when additional information needs to be provided by staff and other governmental agencies, etc. If this occurs, the decision is continued to the next meeting or a specified date.

Q: What is the proper way to address the Commission?

A: When you address the Chairman, it is suggested that you use the terms Madam Chair or Mr. Chairman. Other members may be addressed as Commissioners.

The Gem County Planning and Zoning Commission meets every second Monday of the month (except holidays) in the large courtroom on the 3rd floor of the Gem County Courthouse. Meetings start at 7:00 pm and usually run 2 to 4 hours depending upon the agenda. The agenda is posted at the County Courthouse and on the County's website at www.co.gem.id.us

The Board of County Commissioners meets every Monday and Tuesday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. They do not meet the 5th Monday or Tuesday of any given month or on Holidays. Their agenda is posted at the County Courthouse and on the County's website at www.co.gem.id.us