



A Guide to Holding Neighborhood Meetings Portland, Maine

Planning and Urban Development Department

Due to the pandemic, applicants currently have additional flexibility on timing for neighborhood meetings other than what the Land Use Code (14-524) would ordinarily allow and can hold the meetings remotely. We are still requiring documentation from the applicant about how you're meeting the new requirements, such as when the meeting occurred, how it occurred (Zoom or other), who and how many attended, how you allowed participation, how you noticed it, and comments and questions raised. We require that this information be forwarded to the Planner in time to incorporate it into the report for the project before it goes to the Planning Board. Please also see sections 10 and 11 of the City Council's Emergency Proclamation for guidance on conducting Neighborhood Meetings during the pandemic period:

<https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/27727/Order-156-FY20-Replacing-list-of-Essential-Services-in-Emergency-Proclamation-as-amended-4142020>

In order to improve communication between applicants and neighbors, the City of Portland requires applicants who are proposing certain types of development projects to hold a neighborhood meeting.

Projects Requiring a Neighborhood Meeting

- Proposed map amendments or contract zones that would result in projects subject to major site plan review;
- Subdivisions of five or more lots;
- Master development plans; and
- Major site plan proposals as defined in Article 14 of the land use code.

Timing of Meeting

- The meeting shall be conducted within 30 days of an application being deemed complete and no less than seven calendar days before a public hearing.

Location of Meeting

- The meeting should be held in the evening, during the week, at a convenient location within the Portland neighborhood surrounding the proposed site. Community meeting spaces at libraries, schools, or other places of assembly are recommended. Neighborhood schools are usually available for evening meetings.
- Meetings should not be held on the same day as scheduled Planning Board or City Council meetings. The City Council generally meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month and the Planning Board generally meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month; however, additional meetings may be scheduled.

An updated schedule may be found on the City's website at portlandmaine.gov

Notice of Meeting

A notice must be sent to neighbors alerting them of the neighborhood meeting time and location. The notice must contain a brief description of the proposal and the date, time, and place of the neighborhood meeting. A template for a neighborhood meeting notice is included in this packet.

Notice List

The notice shall be mailed to the following:

- Property owners within 500 feet of the proposed development (1,000 feet for subdivisions in and industrial zone or industrial zone changes)
- Interested citizens and neighborhood groups.

The Planning Department will make the above lists available for downloading (in excel format) under the attachments folder within the project in the Customer Self Service Portal (CSS). If you have any questions obtaining these lists, please contact the Planning Department at 874-8719 or 874-8721 or e-mail at planning@portlandmaine.gov.

When to Send Notice

- The notice must be sent no less than 10 days (to include weekends) prior to the neighborhood meeting.
- Notices may be sent by regular mail and do not need to be sent by certified mail.
- **For confirmation purposes, please email a copy of the notice to planning@portlandmaine.gov**

Hosting the Meeting & Keeping a Record

- A sign-in sheet must be circulated for those in attendance. The sign-in sheet should serve as a record of the public in attendance, as well as a record of all presenters and/or representatives of the applicant in attendance.
- The applicant shall provide an explanation of the proposal and provide an opportunity for public comment.
- The applicant must keep a record of public comment received during the meeting, including comments, questions, data, or other feedback collected. The record must also include a list of plans, documents, and drawings that were shared by the applicant, as well as start and end times of the meeting.
- The sign-in sheet and record of feedback shall be submitted to the Planning Department.

A public hearing will not be scheduled until the sign-in sheet and record of feedback are submitted to the Planning Department.

A certification form is included with this packet to be completed and signed by the applicant.

Attachments

1. Neighborhood Meeting Notice Template
2. Neighborhood Meeting Certification
3. Attendance Sign in Sheet Example

EXAMPLE: Neighborhood Meeting Invitation Format

Applicant/Consultant Letterhead

(Date)

Dear Neighbor:

Please join us for a neighborhood meeting to discuss our plans for a (proposed project description) located at (proposed project address).

Meeting Location:

Meeting Date:

Meeting Time:

(The Land Use Code requires that neighboring property owners and residents on an “interested parties list” be invited to participate in this neighborhood meeting. A sign-in sheet will be circulated and a record of the meeting will be taken. Both the sign-in sheet and record will be submitted to the Planning Board.)

If you have any questions, please call (telephone number of applicant or consultant).

Signed,

(Applicant’s Signature)

(Date)

Note:

Under the City of Portland land use code, an applicant for a major site plan, master development plan, subdivision of over five lots, or zoning map amendment is required to hold a neighborhood meeting within 30 days of an application being deemed complete and no less than seven calendar days before a public hearing. Should you wish to offer additional comments on this proposed development, you may forward them by e-mail to planning@portlandmaine.gov or by mail to the Planning and Urban Development Department, Planning Division, 4th Floor, 389 Congress Street Portland, ME 04101.

EXAMPLE: Neighborhood Meeting Certification

I, (applicant/consultant) hereby certify that a neighborhood meeting was held on (date) at (location) at (time) for the proposed project located at (proposed project address).

I also certify that on (date at least ten (10) days prior to the neighborhood meeting), notices were mailed to the following:

1. All addresses on the mailing list provided by the Planning Division which includes property owners within 500 feet of the proposed development (1,000 feet for subdivisions within an industrial zone or industrial zone changes).
2. Residents on the “interested parties” list.

Signed,

(Applicant’s Signature)

(Date)

Attachments

1. Copy of the notice sent
2. Sign-in sheet
3. Record of feedback

EXAMPLE: Neighborhood Meeting Sign-In Sheet

(Date of Meeting)

(Location of Meeting)

(Proposed Project Name and Address)

Members of the Public in Attendance:

Name	Email

Developer and Consultant Team in Attendance:

Name	Email