



Powhatan County

**RULES OF ORDER  
FOR THE  
POWHATAN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
2025 - 2026**

**I. GENERAL RULES**

1. The Commission's parliamentary procedures shall conform with law and with the historical practices of the Commission. Any questions involving interpretation or application of these Rules of Order shall be addressed to the County Attorney who shall be the designated Parliamentarian representing the Commission.
2. The Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected at the annual organizational meeting generally held in February of each calendar year to serve a one-year term with re-election permitted. The Chair shall be responsible for conducting the meetings and shall rule on the interpretation of the Rules of Order. The Vice Chair shall preside in the absence of the Chair.
3. The Planning Director or a designee of the Commission shall be the Secretary.

**II. MEETINGS**

1. Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held in the Village Building Auditorium (3910 Old Buckingham Road) or other location as designated by the Commission or Planning Director on the first Tuesday of each month. If such meeting falls on any legal holiday, then it shall be held on another day designated by the Commission.
2. The time for regular meetings shall be 6:00 p.m. unless otherwise directed by the Commission. Public hearings shall be advertised for 6:00 p.m. If a majority of the Commission fails to attend within half an hour after the time appointed for any meeting, the Secretary shall enter into the minute book the names of the members present and note the adjournment for want of a quorum.
3. Workshop meetings of the Commission shall be held in the Village Building Conference Room (3910 Old Buckingham Road), or at another location as designated by the Commission or Planning Director, and shall be called on an as-needed basis.
4. The time for workshop meetings shall be 6:00 p.m. or immediately following a regular meeting, unless otherwise directed by the Commission.
5. Meetings shall not extend beyond 10:00 p.m. unless extended by resolution of the Commission.
6. If the Chair, or Vice-Chair, if the Chair is unable to act, finds and declares that the weather or other conditions are such that it is hazardous for Commission members and the public to attend a regular meeting, the meeting shall be postponed for a period of one week to the same time; however, if the postponement date would be a County holiday or the day before a County

holiday, then the meeting shall be postponed to two (2) days after the County holiday. Commission members and the media will be notified as promptly as possible, and notice will be posted on the front doors of the Commission's meeting place. All hearings and other matters previously advertised will be conducted at the continued meeting, and no further advertisement or notice is required.

7. Special meetings of the Commission and Commission work sessions to discuss planning and land use issues may be called by the Commission or by the Chair and held at times and places designated at the time of the call of such meetings. All parties having requested notification of meetings pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act shall be notified of any special meeting.

### **III. QUORUM, MOTIONS & VOTING**

1. A quorum of the Commission shall consist of three (3) of the five (5) members of the Commission. A quorum must be present at all meetings to transact any official business and, unless otherwise required by law or these Rules of Order, no action of the Commission is valid unless authorized by a majority vote of those present and voting. An abstention, although not a vote in favor or against the motion, shall be counted as a vote for the purpose of determining a quorum. Provided, however, if a Commissioner is disqualified in accordance with the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act, Va. Code §§ 2.2-3100 et seq., and this results in less than the number required by law to act, the remaining member or members shall have authority to act for the Commission by majority vote, unless a unanimous vote of all members is required by law, in which case authority to act shall require a unanimous vote of the remaining members.
2. If a quorum is not present at any meeting, items on the agenda requiring action shall be moved to the agenda of the next regular meeting of the Commission or to the agenda of a special meeting of the Commission, if one is called for that purpose.
3. When a motion is under debate, no additional motions may be made except a motion to withdraw, defer, substitute, or to amend. If the maker of a motion and the member seconding the motion agree, a motion may be amended or withdrawn. Such motions shall take precedence in the order listed above. Only one substitute motion shall be in order for a principal motion. All motions to defer an item shall be to a date certain.
4. A tie vote on any motion means the defeat of the motion for a lack of a majority vote. When a tie vote occurs and no other motion is passed on an item for which a decision is required by law, the item shall (i) be carried over to the next regularly scheduled meeting or (ii) to a time, date and place specified by a majority vote of the Commission, or (iii) disposed of as required by law. If the item cannot be carried over due to a statutory time limit, and the item requires Board action, the item will be forwarded to the Board with a report of the tie vote.

5. Any vote by a member of the Commission is final once cast. Commission decisions are final once made. No ordinance, resolution or motion previously voted on by the Commission shall be brought forward for reconsideration during the same meeting of the Commission.

#### **IV. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS**

1. Members shall address only the Chair or address each other through the Chair. A member must be recognized by the Chair before proceeding. Upon being recognized, a member shall not be interrupted during the time allowed, except when a point of order is called or upon being requested to yield the floor by another member.
2. The applicant or their agent should sit in the front rows nearest the lectern in order to be available to discuss/answer questions concerning their application.
3. Individuals interested in addressing the Commission shall only do so at the lectern for their comments to be recorded as part of the record of the meeting, and shall only address the Commission, not the audience, the applicants, or staff. Comments of each individual shall be limited to three (3) minutes unless additional time is granted by the Chair. If additional time is granted for one, it shall be granted for all.
4. Neighborhoods should select a spokesperson to present their comments. The spokesperson should ask all persons supporting his or her comments to stand in lieu of repetitive comments. Spokespersons may speak for up to five (5) minutes provided at least three other members of their group is present at the meeting and no other member of the group speaks.
5. Successive speakers for either the proponents or the opponents should address different issues and should not be repetitive.
6. When conducting public hearings, the order outlined below may be observed. The Chair may alter the procedure and time limits as needed to assure that public hearings are conducted in an orderly, fair, and expeditious manner.
  - Brief description and presentation of issue by County staff or other appropriate persons, and County staff analysis or recommendation
  - Presentation by the applicant or applicant's representative of up to 10 minutes
  - Comments by proponents and opponents, typically limited to 3 minutes per person, which may not include any presentations (video, audio, slides)
  - Rebuttal remarks by applicant or applicant's representative of up to 3 minutes
  - Commission discussion, questions, and action by the Commission

#### **V. AGENDAS**

1. The following is the standard regular meeting agenda:

- a. Call to Order (6:00 p.m.)
  - b. Invocation
  - c. Administrative Items (including Agenda Amendments and Adoption of Minutes)
  - d. Public Comment Period
  - e. Public Hearings for Rezonings and Conditional Use Permits
  - f. Public Hearings for Ordinance Amendments
  - g. Consideration of Development Design Pattern Books
  - h. Commission Matters and Miscellaneous
2. Matters may be placed on the Agenda by Resolution of the Commission, by notification to the Secretary by any member of the Commission, or by the Planning Director.
- a. Matters submitted within the prescribed filing deadline are automatically added to the agenda in order of date/time of application, provided the application has been deemed complete by the Planning Director. Administrative matters not required to be filed by the prescribed filing deadline, but which are requested to be placed on the Commission agenda, may be accepted for placement until the submission date of publication of advertisement for Commission public hearings. After this date, matters can only be placed on the agenda with the consent of the Chair.
  - b. The Planning Director shall have the authority to delay the placement of an item on the Commission agenda if:
    - 1. The application is not, in the opinion of the Planning Director, complete; or
    - 2. In the case of Applicant-initiated deferral requests as follows:
      - a. For first submissions (those that have not previously been reviewed by the Planning Commission):
        - i. If the deferral request is made by the Applicant prior to the first Public Hearing advertisement, the Planning Director has the authority to place the case on a subsequent meeting agenda.
        - ii. If the deferral request is made by the Applicant after the first Public Hearing advertisement, the deferral request must be approved or denied by the Planning Commission.
      - b. For cases that have been previously reviewed by the Commission and have either been deferred by the Commission or remanded to the Commission from the Board of Supervisors, all deferral requests must be approved or denied by the Planning Commission.
  - 3. Agenda and information to be discussed shall be distributed to each member approximately one week prior to the meeting.

## **VI. COURTESY**

Those persons coming before the Commission shall be extended every courtesy by members of the Commission. Visitors at Commission meetings will be asked to extend the same courtesy. The Chair shall determine when the proper courtesies are not being demonstrated.

## **VII. AMENDMENT**

1. With the exception of statutory requirements, the Commission may suspend the application of any of its Rules of Order by a unanimous vote of all the members present at the time.
2. These Rules of Order may be amended by a majority vote at any meeting of the Commission after not less than twenty-four (24) hours prior notice has been given to all members of the Commission and a copy of the proposed amendment sent with the notice. Alternatively, the Rules of Order may be amended without such prior notice upon the unanimous vote of all five members of the Commission.
3. Only Commission members have standing to raise noncompliance with these Rules, and only at the time of the violation. Failure of the Commission to comply with these Rules does not invalidate any action taken by the Commission. Procedural issues not covered by these Rules may be guided, first, by the Commission's historical practice, then by the determination of the parliamentarian which will be generally based on the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order. The failure, however, of the Commission to comply with Robert's Rules of Order shall not invalidate any action taken by the Commission.