

Town of Hudson, New Hampshire Bylaws
Zoning Board of Adjustment
(Revised as of October 12, 2017)

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143.1 History

Adopted by the Zoning Board of Adjustment of the Town of Hudson 12-14-1978; amended in its entirety 06-23-1988, and amended again in its entirety on 06-23-2011. Subsequent amendments noted where applicable. Amended in entirety on 10-12-17.

143.2 Authority

These bylaws of the Hudson Zoning Board of Adjustment, hereinafter referenced simply as the Board, are adopted under the Authority of NH-RSA (New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated) 676:1. In the event of a difference between these bylaws and the applicable NH-RSAs, the NH-RSAs take precedence over these Bylaws.

143.3 Purpose

The purpose of these bylaws is to ensure an orderly procedure in the execution of the duties of the Board.

143.4 Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the voting members at a regular meeting of the Board provided such amendments are read at two successive public meetings.

143.5 Officers

1. A Chairman shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the Board at the first meeting in the month of January.

The Chairman shall preside over all meetings and hearings, appoint such committees as directed by the Board and shall affix his/her signature in the name of the Board.

2. A Vice-Chairman shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the Board at the first meeting in the month of January.

The vice-Chairman shall preside in the absence of the Chairman and shall have the full powers of the Chairman on matters which come before the Board during the absence of the Chairman.

3. A Clerk shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the Board at the first meeting in the month of January.

The clerk shall maintain a record of all meetings, transactions and decisions of the Board, and perform such other duties as the Board may direct by resolution.

4. All officers shall serve for one year and shall be eligible for re-election.

143.6 Members and Alternates

1. Five Regular Members shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen attend all meetings, and sit as voting members

2. Five Alternate Members shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen, attend all meetings to familiarize themselves with the workings of the Board and stand ready to serve whenever a regular member of the Board is unable to fulfill his/her responsibilities.

3. A Selectman Liaison may be appointed by the Board of Selectman to act as a liaison between the two Boards and should attend all meetings but shall have no voting powers nor the ability to sit in place of any regular member not in attendance.

4. At meetings of the Board, alternates who are not activated to fill the seat of an absent or recused member or who have not been appointed by the Chairman to temporarily fill the unexpired term of a vacancy may participate with the Board in a limited capacity. During a public hearing, alternates may sit at the table with the regular members and may view documents, listen to testimony, ask questions and interact with other Board members, the applicant, abutters and the public. Alternates shall not be allowed to make or second motions. Once the Board moves into deliberations, alternates shall remove themselves from any further deliberations with the Board. During work sessions or portions of meetings that do not include a public hearing, alternates may fully participate, exclusive of any motions or votes that may be made. At all times, the Chairman shall fully inform the public of the status of any alternate present and identify the members who shall be voting on the application.

5. All members and alternates must reside in the community and are expected to attend each meeting of the Board to exercise their duties and responsibilities. Any member unable to attend a meeting shall notify the Chairman as soon as possible. Members, including the Chairman and all officers, shall participate in the decision-making process and vote to approve or disapprove all motions under consideration.

143.7 Meetings

1. Regular meetings (for appeals and Hearings) shall be held at Hudson Town Hall, at 7:00pm on the fourth Thursday of each month in accordance with RSA 676:5-7 and RSA 91-A:2. The Chairman may schedule additional overflow meetings, or reschedule meetings after consultation with the Zoning Administrator (or designee).

2. Other meetings may be held on the call of the Chairman, or a majority vote of the Board in accordance with RSA 91-A: 2II.

All Board members shall be given notice of meetings by mail or email one week prior to the meeting date.

3. Quorum: A quorum for all meetings of the Board shall be three members, including alternates sitting in place of members.

a. The Chairman shall make every effort to ensure that all five members, and one or two alternates, are present for the consideration of any appeal or application.

b. If any regular Board member is absent from any meeting or hearing, or disqualifies

himself from sitting on a particular case, the Chairman shall designate one of the alternate members to sit in place of the absent or disqualified member, and such alternate shall be in all respects a full member of the Board while so sitting.

c. Alternates shall generally be activated on a rotating basis from those present at a particular meeting. When an alternate is needed, the Chairman shall select the alternate who has not been activated for the longest time.

d. If there are less than five members (including alternates) present, the Chairman shall give the option to proceed or not to the applicant. Should the applicant choose to proceed with less than five members present that shall not solely constitute grounds for a rehearing should the application fail.

3. Disqualifications: If any member finds it necessary to disqualify himself from sitting in a particular case, as provided in RSA 673:14, he shall notify the Chairman as soon as possible so that an alternate may be requested to sit in his place. When there is uncertainty as to whether a member should be disqualified to act on a particular application, that member or another member of the Board may request the Board to vote on the question of disqualification. Any such request shall be made before the public hearing gets underway. The vote shall be advisory and non-binding.

Determining the threshold of disqualification can be difficult. To assist a member in determining whether or not they should step down (recuse themselves) Board members should review the questions which are asked of potential jurors to determine qualification (RSA 500-A: 12). A potential juror may be asked whether he or she:

- a. Expects to gain or lose upon the disposition of the case;
- b. Is related to either party;
- c. Has advised or assisted either party;
- d. Has directly or indirectly given an opinion or formed an opinion;
- e. Is employed by or employs any party in the case;
- f. Is prejudiced to any degree regarding the case; or
- g. Employs any of the counsel appearing in the case in any action then pending in the court.

Either the Chairman or the Member disqualifying himself/herself before the beginning of the public hearing on the case shall announce the disqualification. The disqualified shall step away from the table during the public hearing and during all deliberation on the case as they so choose.

4. Order of Business

The order of business for regular meetings shall be as follows:

- a. Call to order by the Chairman.
- b. Roll call by the clerk
- c. Unfinished Business (Continued or Deferred Hearings)
- d. New Hearing(s)
- e. Requests for Rehearing
- f. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting (s)

- g. New Business
- h. Communications and items of interest to the Board, Other Business
- i. Adjournment

(Note: Although this is the usual order of business, the Board may wish to hold the hearings immediately after the roll call in order to accommodate the public, based on a positive vote of the Board.)

143.8 Application Process

1. Applications

- a. Each application for a hearing before the Board shall be made on forms provided by the Board and shall be presented to the Zoning Administrator (or designee) who shall record the date and time of receipt.

Application deadline for meeting is 12:00 noon, 12 business days (Monday-Friday including Holidays) prior the scheduled meeting date.

Only complete and accurate applications will be submitted for agenda action, incomplete or inaccurate applications will not be submitted for agenda action.

- b. Appeals from an administrative decision taken under RSA 676:5 shall be filed within 30 days of the decision or when such decision becomes known or reasonably could have been known by the petitioner as determined by the Board.
- c. All forms and revisions prescribed shall be adopted by resolution of the Board and shall become part of these rules of procedure

2. Public Notice

- a. Public notice of hearings on each application shall be given in general newspaper and shall be posted at Town Hall, Town Public Library and the Post Office not less than five (5) days before the date fixed for the hearing. Notice shall include the name of the applicant, description of property to include tax map identification, action desired by the applicant, provisions of the zoning ordinance concerned, the type of appeal being made, and the date, time and place of the hearing.
- b. Personal notice shall be made by certified mail to the applicant and all direct abutters and regular mail for indirect abutters within 200' not less than five (5) days before the date of the hearing.
- c. The applicant shall pay for all required notice costs in advance.

3. Public Hearing

The conduct of public hearings shall be governed by the following rules:

- a. The Chairman shall call the hearing in session by instructing the clerk to report on the first case.
- b. The Zoning Administrator shall report why the case has been brought before the Board.

- c. Members and Alternates of the Board, and any party to the case, may ask questions at any point during testimony once recognized by the Chairman.
- d. Each person who appears shall be required to state his/her name and address for the record and indicate whether he/she is a party to the case or an agent or counsel of a party to the case.
- e. The applicant shall be called to present his appeal.
- f. Those appearing in favor of the appeal shall be allowed to speak.
- g. Those in opposition or neutral to the appeal shall be allowed to speak.
- h. The applicant and those in favor shall be allowed to speak in rebuttal.
- i. Those in opposition to the appeal shall be allowed to speak in rebuttal.
- j. Any person who wants the Board to compel the attendance of a witness shall present his request in writing to the Chairman in accordance with RSA 673.15
- k. The Board of adjustment will hear with interest any evidence that pertains to the facts of the Case or how the facts relate to the provisions of the zoning ordinance and state zoning law.
- l. The Chairman shall present a summary setting forth the facts of the case and the claims made for each side (see Findings of Facts form in Appendix C). Opportunity shall be given for correction from the floor.
- m. The public hearing on the Case shall be declared closed and the Case will be declared to be before the Board. The Board will deliberate and make its decision.
- n. All subsequent cases shall then be heard in the order they were presented.

143.9 Decision Process

Before deliberations begin, the Chairman shall allow non-sitting alternates, the Selectmen's Liaison, if present, and the Zoning Administrator or his/her replacement to ask questions and give input, if they so desire.

Once this phase is completed, the Chairman shall declare the matter before the Board and the sitting members present who are voting will raise any further questions they may have and then deliberate all concerns in order to reach a decision on the request.

The Board shall vote on each of the applications for which testimony was given, after adequate deliberations.

The Chairman shall announce all decisions after the vote has been taken.

143.10 Deferment and Withdrawal

After public notice has been given, each application presented to the Board for consideration may be deferred or withdrawn only by action of the Board, following receipt of written notice to the

Zoning Administrator or to the Board, itself, by the applicant. A sitting member must make a motion to defer until the next regular meeting or a date specific, that motion must be seconded and voted on by the sitting members of the case in question, and abutter notice shall be presumed to have been accomplished by the decision of the Board's vote.

In the event that a deferred applicant is not ready when the case comes back before the Board, the Board may initiate withdrawal of the application, with or without prejudice, where "with prejudice" means that any new application (unless substantially changed) cannot be filed for a period of one year. Filing fees shall not be returned for withdrawn cases that have been reviewed and processed by staff with public notice of a scheduled hearing having been posted.

Moreover, once an application has been withdrawn, any re-application shall be considered a new application and the applicant shall be required to pay all applicable fees for consideration. In the event of a Board-initiated deferment, because members felt it necessary for more information or other reason, a sitting member must make a motion to defer until the next regular meeting or a date specific, that motion must be seconded and voted on by the voting members of the case in question, and abutter notice shall be presumed to have been accomplished by the decision of the Board's vote, but in some rare instances the Board may require that notification fees be paid again for deferred cases in order to ensure that abutters are properly notified. In the event of the Board's acceptance of a request for deferment by the applicant at the meeting, the request shall be handled in the same manner as a Board-initiated deferment. In the event that the applicant is not ready when the case comes back before the Board, the Board may initiate withdrawal of the application, with or without prejudice, as described above.

143.11 Reconsideration by the Board

The Board may reconsider a decision to grant or deny an application or grant or deny a motion for rehearing provided such reconsideration is within the appeal period of the original decision as per RSA 667:3

143.12 Motions for Rehearing

If the Board grants a motion for rehearing, the new public hearing shall be held within 30 days of the decision to grant the rehearing provided all notice fees are paid and an updated abutters list is submitted by the party requesting the rehearing. Notification of the rehearing shall follow the procedures set forth in RSA 677:2. [October 2012]

143.13 Records

1. The records of the Board shall be kept by the Zoning Administrator and made available for public inspection at Hudson Town Hall in accordance with RSA 673:17.
2. Final written decisions will be placed on file and available for public inspection within 5 business days after the decision is made. RSA 676:3
3. Minutes of all meetings including names of Board members, persons appearing before the Board, and a brief description of the subject matter shall be open to public inspection within 5 business days of the public meeting. RSA 91-A:2 II

143.14 Waivers

Any portion of these rules of procedure may be waived in such cases where, in the opinion of the Board, strict conformity would pose a practical difficulty to the applicant and a waiver would not be contrary to the spirit and intent of the rules. A majority of the Board present shall vote any waiver.

143.15 Joint Meetings and Hearings

1. RSA 676:2 provides that the Board of Adjustment may hold joint meetings or hearings with other "Land Use Boards," including the Planning Board, the Historic District Commission, the Building Code Board of Appeals, and the Inspector of Buildings, and that each Board shall have discretion as to whether or not to hold a joint meeting with any other land use Board.
2. Joint business meetings with any other land use Board may be held at any time when called jointly by the Chairman of the two Boards.
3. A public hearing on any appeal to the Board of Adjustment will be held jointly with another Board only under the following conditions:
 - a. The joint public hearing must be a formal public hearing on appeals to both Boards regarding the same subject matter; and
 - b. If the other Board is the Planning Board, RSA 676:2 requires that the Planning Board Chairman shall chair the joint hearing. If the other Board is not the Planning Board, then the Board of Adjustment Chairman shall chair the joint hearing; and
 - c. The provisions covering the conduct of public hearings, set forth in these rules, together with such additional provisions as may be required by the other Board, shall be followed; and
 - d. The other Board shall concur with the above.