



FNA Zoning Committee Changes

The FNA recently approved new zoning committee procedures. How do these changes impact you? To find out, download the procedures at www.fishtownlife.com or contact an FNA officer or zoning committee member to arrange for a hard copy.

For those who think 25 pages of zoning committee procedures is excessive, please see below for an overview.



Where did these new zoning procedures come from?

In the spring of 2006, the FNA general membership voted to create an ad-hoc committee to draft zoning procedures. During the summer, the final version of the procedures was approved as standing committee rules by FNA's executive board.



What's the function of the FNA zoning committee?

By definition, the zoning committee is a neutral body that facilitates interaction between zoning applicants and the surrounding neighbors and solicits community input about development projects, usually in the form of a vote.



What does the committee do after neighbors vote on a project?

The results are sent to the city's Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) for consideration during the applicant's zoning hearing.



Is Fishtown's vote binding?

No. The ZBA has the final word on which projects are approved for zoning.



Who is eligible to vote at Fishtown's zoning meetings?

All zoning-related meetings are open to the public, but voting eligibility depends on the type of meeting:

- **Community meetings**, held to present large-scale development projects: all Fishtown* homeowners, tenants, and business owners are eligible to vote.
- **Local neighbors' meetings**, held to present small-scale developments projects: homeowners, tenant, and business owners within 500 linear feet of the proposed project or on an adjacent street are eligible to vote.
- **Zoning committee meetings**, held to hear preliminary applicant presentations and to schedule applicants' appearance before the community: **THERE ARE NO VOTES AT ZONING COMMITTEE MEETINGS.**

*Fishtown boundaries, as defined by the FNA, are Delaware River to Laurel, Laurel to Front, Front to Norris, Norris to Trenton, Trenton to Frankford, Frankford to York, and York to the Delaware River, including both sides of boundary streets.



What determines if a project requires a community-wide vote?

Projects in the “large-scale development” category are brought before the entire community. Large-scale development includes anything that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Consisting of four or more residential units
- Requiring a height variance
- Intended as industrial or commercial
- Intended for a brown field or other suspected contaminated site



So all of Fishtown gets to vote on the after-hours bingo nightclub that’s proposed for my block?

Yes. However, the votes of the local neighbors and the community-at-large will be tallied and reported to the ZBA separately.



Will there be any changes to the zoning meeting proceedings?

Yes. Some of the major changes are listed below, but please refer to the complete procedures for details:

- A photo ID with a Fishtown address (or a picture ID along with a piece of mail) will be required to vote
- Voting will now occur via ballot, not by show of hands
- Because of the above changes, meeting check-in may take longer than usual. Please bear with the zoning committee as it transitions to the new procedures and works to make the process more efficient.



When will the zoning meetings be held, and how can I find out about them?

Zoning committee meetings will continue to be held on the second Tuesday of the month. Community-wide meetings will be scheduled on the 1st Monday and 3rd Tuesday of the month, and the local neighbor’s meetings will be scheduled as required. All meetings will be advertised in the local newspapers, on the local websites, and on the FNA’s website and e-mail alerts. The zoning committee will solicit help to distribute flyers to properties that meet the “local resident” definition for the project in question.



Is the FNA zoning committee pro-developer? Anti-developer? Allied with the casinos? Allied with NABR?

None of the above. The zoning committee is a neutral body.



Will these be the Fishtown zoning procedures for all eternity?

No. The procedures are expected to evolve to accommodate community feedback and to correct any oversights/bad ideas.