

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Meeting Protocol and Tips for Effective Public Meetings

What is the Design Review Board?

The Design Review Board (DRB) is composed of five (5) regular members and one (1) alternate member who are residents of the City of San Rafael appointed by the City Council for four-year terms. The DRB members serve as volunteers and the board must include at least two licensed architects or building designers, one landscape architect, at least one member with experience as an urban designer. The DRB is an advisory body to the City for the purpose of reviewing and formulating recommendations on all design matters for new construction, additions or renovations. The DRB provides professional design analysis, evaluation and judgment as to the completeness, competence and appropriateness of development proposals for their use and setting and to recommend approval, approval with conditions, redesign or denial based on design standards adopted by the City Council.

The DRB's role as an advisory body means that they make their recommendations on design matters to the City staff, Planning Commission or City Council. A positive recommendation from the DRB is typically required in order for a project to be recommended for approval to the decision-making authority. The DRB regularly meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. The DRB meets the same week as the City Council. Thus, if the first week of the month begins on a Tuesday, then the Board would meet the following week, the day after the first City Council meeting.

Conduct of the Hearing

- A Quorum of three (3) DRB members (or two (2) regular members and the alternate member) is required in order for the DRB to conduct a meeting. The following outlines the process for conduct of a public hearing: Staff provides a written and oral report, summarizing the application and significant issues and answering questions from the Commission.
- The Chair opens the public meeting. To provide sufficient time for all agenda items and to allow time for DRB deliberation, time limits will be imposed on all speakers.
- The Applicant makes a presentation, limited to 10 minutes, highlighting design aspects of the proposal, response to staff or public concerns, or changes made to the project.
- The Chair will then call on members of the public requesting to speak. Representatives of community groups will typically be allowed up to 5 minutes and individuals 3 minutes to provide oral testimony.
- After all members of the public have had an opportunity to speak once, the Chair will close the public meeting.
- The DRB may ask questions of staff, technical experts, the applicant, the appellant or others.
- The DRB will then deliberate and reach a decision/recommendation, which could be:
 - ✓ Recommend approval or denial of the application, or
 - ✓ Continuance of the item to a future agenda, usually for more information or project revisions to address their recommendation.

Tips for Participating in Effective Public Meetings at the Design Review Board

Purpose: The purpose of the public meeting is to provide important information to the public and to members of the DRB Commission to assist them in their review and recommendation on design matters. Public meetings are not intended to be demonstrations or popularity contests. All participants are expected to conduct themselves in a civil and respectful manner.

Applicant's Presentations: Be prepared, succinct and to the point and focus on design matters, including the development of the proposed design and design details. Submit written and graphic material in complete form in

time to be reviewed and included in the staff report. In oral presentations, limit the presentation to provide new information beyond that previously submitted in writing or to highlight the most important features of your application. Identify changes made to the project to respond to public or staff concerns or disagreements with the staff recommendation or proposed conditions of approval.

Public Presentations: Be prepared, succinct and to the point and focus on design relate matters. The land use matter and other non design matter will be considered by the staff, Planning Commission or City Council. Submit written and graphic material in complete form in time to be reviewed and included in the staff report. If you have sent the DRB a letter or e-mail, do not repeat the information or opinions in oral testimony. If another member of the public has made the same point you intended to, you need not repeat it, or may just state, when called to the podium, that you agree with the previous speaker.

Rules of Decorum

- Turn off cell phones, pagers or other electronic devices.
- Address the DRB with all testimony. Address any questions through the Chair. Do not address the applicant, members of the public or staff.
- Wait to be recognized by the Chair before speaking. After speaking, please write down your name and contact information in the logbook to help assure accuracy in the meeting minutes.
- Be succinct, stay on topic and remain focused on the salient issues.
- Address issues, not individuals.
- Agree or disagree respectfully. Please, no applause, or booing or personal attacks. Support or oppose an applicant or appellant with respect and decorum.
- Please take personal discussions out of the chambers and into the lobby so as not to disturb others or disrupt the public hearing. At the conclusion of your item, please exit the chambers so other agenda items may be dealt with, without distraction.

Submittals to the Design Review Board

- The DRB strongly encourages and appreciates the submittal of written information prior to the meeting date rather than at the hearing. Letters and e-mails received by the project planner or the DRB Secretary or planner by noon on Fridays prior to the meeting date will be delivered to the DRB as part of their packets. Material provided by noon on Mondays prior to the meeting date will be faxed to DRB if under six pages. Material submitted at the hearing may not be adequately considered by the DRB.
- Requests to meet with DRB should be provided to staff, who will forward the request to the DRB member(s).
- All correspondence to the DRB should be submitted to the Planning Division, who will in turn keep copies for the file and distribute to the DRB.

Availability of Staff Reports

- Staff reports are sent to the DRB on Friday afternoon prior to a meeting. Copies of reports may be obtained after 3:00 p.m. at the Planning Division, 3rd floor of City Hall, 1400 Fifth Avenue, or can be viewed on-line at: <http://www.cityofsanrafael.org/meetings> and then clicking on the agenda for the appropriate DRB meeting. Once the agenda is open, you can click on the appropriate link for the project you are interested in.