



PUTNAM COUNTY  
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS  
RULES OF PROCEDURE 2022

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS  
PUTNAM COUNTY

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## **ARTICLE 1: AUTHORITY AND DUTIES**

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### **1.01 Authority**

The Putnam County Board of Zoning Appeals (hereinafter called “Board”) exists and functions as a quasi-judicial Board under the authority of IC 36-7-4-900 series and Title XV of the Putnam County, Indiana Code of Ordinance, and any amendments thereto. These Rules are adopted in accordance with the requirements of IC 36-7-4-916.

### **1.02 Jurisdiction**

The Board’s jurisdiction consists of all of Putnam County except the City of Greencastle, Towns of Bainbridge, Cloverdale, Roachdale, and Fillmore.

### **1.03 Duties**

The duties of the Board shall be those set forth in IC 36-7-4-900 et al., and such other responsibilities as may be required by state statute or county ordinance. Along with overseeing the Unsafe Building Ordinance (Section 150.075 of the Putnam County Code of Ordinances).

## **ARTICLE 2: OFFICERS, MEMBERS, AND EMPLOYEES**

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### **2.01 Membership**

- A. The Board shall consist of five (5) voting members, appointed in accordance with IC 36-7-4-208.
- B. The terms of the Board members at the time of its initial establishment shall be consistent with the provision of IC 36-7-4-906.
- C. After the initial establishment of the Board, each member shall serve a four (4) year term, consistent with the provisions of Indiana Law. The terms for all Board members shall expire on the first Monday in January of the appropriate year, based on their individual date of appointment and the requirements of Indiana Law.
- D. No member of the Board may hold any other elected or appointed office in Putnam County or any state or municipal government with the exceptions of those which are specified in Indiana Law as being necessary to qualify an individual for membership on the Board (such as membership on the Plan Commission as per IC 36-7-902).
- E. Determination of proper membership. At the first meeting of each year, the Board shall determine whether or not each member of the Board meets the following qualifications:
  1. The member is currently appointed by the relevant appointing body (Commissioner and council – 1 member each)
  2. The citizen members have knowledge of, and experience in, community affairs, and awareness of social, economic, and other problems of the area, and interest in the development of the area

3. The citizen members must be a resident of the jurisdictional area of the Board
- F. There shall be no limit to the number of terms, including consecutive terms, which members may serve.
- G. Any member may be removed from the Board and replaced, consistent with any applicable provision of Indiana Law, by the entity which has appointed them. If removing a member prior to the expiration of his/her term, the appointing authority shall mail them, at their residence, written notice stating the reasons for removal. Any member who is removed may appeal the removal to the circuit or superior court of Putnam County within thirty (30) days of his/her removal.

## 2.02 Officers

- A. At its first regularly scheduled meeting in each calendar year, the Board shall elect from its voting membership a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson.
- B. A person receiving a majority vote of the entire membership of the Board shall be declared elected. Each elected office shall enter office immediately upon being declared elected and shall serve until his/her successor is declared elected or until the officer is no longer a member of the Board.
- C. When an office becomes vacant, the Board shall elect a successor to complete the remainder of the unexpired term at its next regular meeting.
- D. Chairperson
  1. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings and perform the duties of a presiding officer, including the appointment of committees and ruling on all points of procedure. The Chairperson shall be a voting member in all matters.
  2. The Chairperson shall sign all official documents on behalf of the Board, or otherwise delegate this duty to the Secretary or Plan Director.
- E. Vice-Chairperson
 

The Vice-Chairperson shall have authority to act as Chairperson of the Board during the absence or disability of the Chairperson.
- F. Chairperson Pro Tempore
 

In the absence of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, the Secretary shall preside over the election of a Chairperson Pro Tempore who shall act as Chairperson for the specific meeting he/she is elected.
- G. Secretary
 

The Plan Director shall be permanently appointed as Secretary of the Board. In the event of a vacancy of the position of Director, the office of Secretary shall be transferred to an Interim Plan Director as appointed by the Board.

**2.03 Members**

- A. Upon resignation or replacement of the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson as a member of the Board, the Board shall elect a successor at its next regularly scheduled meeting.
- B. If a vacancy occurs among the members of the Board, the appointing authority shall appoint a member for the unexpired term of the vacating member. The appointing authority shall be notified in writing by the secretary when a member has been absent for three (3) consecutive meetings of the Board. Such absences may constitute cause for removal from the Board by the appointing authority under IC 36-7-4-218(f).
- C. The appointing authority (County Commissioners) may appoint an alternate member to participate with the Board in any hearing or decision if the regular member it has appointed has a disqualification under IC 36-7-4-909 or is unavailable to participate in the hearing or decision. An alternate member shall have all the powers and duties of a regular member while participating in the hearing or decision. The Plan Director shall then call on the alternate member to participate in the hearing or decision.
- D. The Plan Director and/or his/her assignee, and other employees of the Plan Board shall serve as the Board staff and shall provide technical and analytical assistance to the Board.

**2.04 Employees**

A. Plan Director

- 1. The Director shall supervise Board staff, carry out all duties pertaining to the daily affairs of the Board, administer and interpret the Zoning and Subdivision Control Ordinances, implement the Comprehensive Plan and any other adopted plan or policy, execute duties involving planning and growth management, and perform other activities deemed necessary by the Board and Plan Commission.
- 2. The Director shall establish personnel policies and administrative office procedures.
- 3. The Director shall conduct a complete and thorough investigation of all matters that come before the Board and may enlist, at his/her discretion, technical and professional assistance from planners, engineers, architects, surveyors, scientists, and other consultants as required.

B. Staff

- 1. The Board may hire staff necessary to discharge the duties of the Board.
- 2. Staff shall be hired by the Director under direction of the Plan Commission.

**2.05 Seal**

- A. The Board adopts a seal with the caption “The Seal of Putnam County Board of Zoning Appeals”.
- B. The Secretary shall employ the seal to certify all official acts of the Board.

**ARTICLE 3: MEETINGS**

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**3.01 Time and Place of Public Hearing**

- A. The regular meetings of the Board shall be the second Monday of each month. If the second Monday is a County-recognized holiday, the hearing shall be held on a different date published in the Board’s adopted meeting schedule.
- B. All meetings will begin at 7:00 p.m. local time.
- C. The location of the meeting shall be in the County Commissioners’ Court, located at the County Courthouse, 1 West Washington Street, Greencastle, Indiana 46135.

**3.02 Applicability**

These rules apply to all meetings (including public hearings) required by state law, the Zoning Ordinance, the Subdivision Control Ordinance, or to any other special or regular meetings of the Board.

**3.03 Meetings Open to Public**

Except for executive sessions as permitted by law, all regular and special meetings of the Board shall be open to the public in compliance with the Indiana Open Door Law, Indiana Code 5-14-1-1.5-1 et. seq.

**3.04 General Rules**

- A. No action is official unless authorized by a majority of the entire membership of the Board at a properly called meeting.
- B. All meetings at which official action is taken shall be open to the general public.
- C. An agenda shall list all items to be considered by the Board at a regular or special meeting.
- D. An agenda shall be distributed to members of the Board in a manner acceptable to them at least three days before any regular meeting. The agenda shall be available for public inspection at the Planning and Building Department at least two days before any regular meeting.

**3.05 Quorum and Voting**

- A. A quorum is a majority of the entire membership of the Board.
- B. Voting shall be by voice or a show of hands, unless an alternative method is deemed appropriate by the Board.
- C. A record of the vote shall be kept in the minutes.

**3.06 Regular Meeting**

- A. The Board shall conduct its regular meetings according to a yearly schedule adopted no later than the last meeting of the previous year.
- B. If it is impossible to conduct a meeting at its regularly scheduled time, the Chairperson may set an alternative date, time, or place. The Chairperson may also cancel the meeting upon unanimous consent of the Board in compliance with Indiana Code 5-14-1.5.
- C. The order of the business at a regular meeting shall be established by the Board.

**3.07 Public Hearings and Notice**

- A. The Board may conduct a public hearing as part of any meeting, or at any other place or time if proper notice is given.
- B. In addition to those required by law, the Board may hold public hearings when it decides that hearings will be in the public interest.
- C. Notice of public hearings shall comply with Indiana Code 5-3-1.
- D. If the Secretary determines that the application meets all requirements of submission, a date shall be set for its public hearing. Notice by publication and additional written notice shall be made as follows:
  - 1. Notice by publication. The petitioner shall publish a notice on time at least ten (10) to the public hearing in the newspaper of general circulation in Putnam County. The notice shall contain the following information:
    - a. Date and place of hearing
    - b. Name of the applicant/petitioner
    - c. Reason for the public hearing
    - d. Name of Township; and Section, Township, and Range Numbers
    - e. Parcel Number
    - f. That the proposal is on file and available for inspection at the Planning and Building Department
    - g. The general location of the property described in the application
    - h. That comments regarding the proposal may be made in writing and filed with the Planning and Building Department. The comments must be received prior to the public hearing in order to be considered by the Board.

2. Additional written notice. Upon a form acceptable to the Board, the applicant shall provide additional written notice by registered, certified, or first-class mail at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the public hearing. The persons so notified shall be the owner of all adjoining parcels of land in Putnam County to a depth of two ownerships within 660 feet of the perimeter of the subject property except as qualified in these Rules. The owner's name and mailing address are determined according to the most recent bound volumes of the real estate tax assessment list on file in the Plat Office or from the Putnam County GIS website.
  - a. For the purposes of giving notice as required by this section, the land described in the application shall be deemed to include any adjoining or adjacent land owned by the applicant, with the exception however, that if the applicant is a railway or other utility, the land described in the application shall not be deemed to include the entire right-of-way but shall be limited to the particular parcel involved.
  - b. Any land separated from land described in the application by streets, alleys, easements, channel waters, or other natural artificial barrier, shall be deemed to be adjoining or adjacent to that described in the application. If the property described in the application abuts or includes a county line, the applicant shall secure the names and addresses of property owners from the appropriate county office.
3. Written notice shall include the following information:
  - a. The general location of the property and a general description of the land as stated in the application.
  - b. That the proposal is on file and may be examined at the office of the Planning and Building Department.
  - c. That the addressee may file written comments concerning the proposal with the Planning and Building Department. The comments must be received prior to the public hearing in order to be considered by the Board.

E. Affidavit of Written Notice

1. The applicant shall furnish evidence of compliance with Section 3.07(D)(3) of these Rules by filing an affidavit with the Secretary at least ten (10) days prior to the public hearing. If the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) day should fall on a weekend or legal holiday, the affidavit may be filed the first day following which is not a weekend or legal holiday.
2. The affidavit shall list the owners of all parcels of ground within the notification boundary to whom notice was sent.

F. Purpose of Written Notice.

Written notice is not required by state law. It serves to supplement the legally required public notice for persons in the vicinity of a proposal before the Board. Written notice shall be considered helpful in disseminating information, but not necessary to meet legally required public notice. Having complied with the provisions of Section 3.07(D)(2) and (3) of these Rules, the applicant shall be considered to have met the intent of written notice and adequate notice to have been served.



G. Supplemental Forms of Notice

1. The Board may authorize supplemental forms of notice deemed necessary by the Board to improve the dissemination of information regarding its activities.
2. These supplemental forms of notice are not required by law and shall be considered helpful in disseminating information but not necessary to meet legally required public notice.

**2.08 Special Meetings**

- A. Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Chairperson or by two (2) members of the Board upon written request to the Secretary.
- B. The secretary shall send written notice fixing the time and place of the meeting to all members at least three (3) days before the special meeting.
- C. Written notice is not required if:
  1. The date, time, and place of the special meeting are fixed in a regular meeting.
  2. All members of the Board are present at that regular meeting; and
  3. The secretary complies with the notice requirements of IC 5-14-1.5.
- D. The order of business shall be established by the Board.

**ARTICLE 4 APPLICATION AND CASE NUMBERS**

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**4.01 Applications**

- A. Application shall be made on forms provided at the Planning and Building Department.
- B. The applicant shall meet all the application submission requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Staff may require additional information if the proposal warrants it.
- C. The Secretary shall review the application and determine whether or not it is complete and accurate. If complete and accurate, the Secretary shall set a date for the applicant's hearing. If not complete and/or accurate, the Secretary may return the application to the applicant and not set a date for the application's hearing.
- D. All application fees are due at the time of application and are not refundable once a hearing date for the application is set.
- E. The deadline for filing an application is 3:30 p.m. on the date established as a filing deadline on the Board's hearing schedule.

- F. The Secretary may limit the number of proposals to be heard at a regularly scheduled meeting if adjournment at a reasonable time would not be possible otherwise. The Chairperson shall be informed when this occurs. Those proposals not scheduled may be heard at a special meeting.

**4.02 Case Numbers**

- A. Each case heard by the Board shall have a case number assigned to it.
- B. The case number shall be in a form established by the Board.

**ARTICLE 5 CONDUCT OF HEARINGS**

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**5.01 Conduct**

- A. Discourteous, disorderly, or contemptuous conduct shall be regarded as a breach of courtesy.
- B. The Chairperson shall preserve order and may warn any person present that particular conduct is a breach of courtesy. If a Board member persists in this conduct following a warning, the Board may vote to censure the offending member. If any other person persists in this conduct following a warning, the Chairperson may order that person expelled from the meeting.
- C. Every person appearing before the Board shall abide by the directions of the Chairperson.
- D. The Chairperson shall determine the admissibility of any evidence.

**5.02 Presentations**

- A. Applicant
  - 1. The applicant or the applicant’s representative must appear before the Board for the case to be heard.
  - 2. The applicant shall first present the facts and arguments in support of the case.
  - 3. The burden shall be on the applicant to supply all information necessary for a clear understanding of the proposal.
  - 4. Information to be displayed to the Board shall be in written form and presented to each of the five (5) members with additional copies for the attorney and Secretary to be used as exhibits in the minutes.

5. The Board and staff may interject during the applicant's presentation with comments or questions.

B. Public Comments

1. Following the applicant's presentation, comments from the public shall be taken.
2. Any person may appear in person or by representative to participate in a discussion of an item before the Board.
3. Any person wishing to speak must register with the Secretary and state their name and address.
4. Comments shall be directed to the Board and not to the applicant or any other person.
5. The Board and staff may query any person speaking to clarify that person's position.

C. Rebuttal

1. The applicant shall have time for rebuttal and to answer questions raised by the public.
2. The applicant shall direct comments to the Board and not to any person.

D. Public Portion of the Hearing Closed

1. Once all testimony is taken, the public portion of the hearing is closed.
2. No further testimony will be taken once the public portion of the hearing is closed.
3. After the public portion of a hearing is closed, the Board may address questions or comments to the applicant or other persons if, in the Board's opinion, the information is necessary to make an informed decision.
4. The Board may discuss the proposal with staff or among its members for any length of time deemed necessary.

E. Conclusion of the Public Hearing

The Chairperson shall conclude the public hearing and call for a motion on the item before the Board.

**5.03 Time Limits**

- A. Discussion of any item shall be limited as follows:
  - 1. Petitioner shall have 10 minutes to present his or her case.
  - 2. Remonstrators and those in support.
    - a. Remonstrators and those in support shall have 3 minutes per person for the presentation of evidence in opposition or support.
  - 3. The petitioner shall than have 5 minutes for rebuttal and to answer questions raised by the public.
- B. No limit shall be placed on the amount of time the Board takes to discuss a proposal.
- C. The Board may grant additional time for discussion if it deems it necessary to make an informed decision. The additional time should be allocated equally between the applicant and the public.

**5.04 Continuance**

- A. The Board may continue the hearing of any case subject to the following provisions:
  - 1. Applicant. The applicant may request and be granted a continuance if the Board deems it necessary to make an informed decision.
  - 2. The Board. The Board may on its own continue any item from one meeting to another.
  - 3. Plan Director. The Director may administratively approve an initial continuance request subject to Section 5.04(B0(1)) of these Rules.
  - 4. Staff. Staff may recommend continuance of any item, subject to Board approval.
- B. Procedure for applicant-initiated continuances
  - 1. Initial application-initiated continuance request
    - a. Administrative Continuance
      - i. A request for an administrative continuance shall be filed with the Plan Director no less than five (5) calendar days prior to the Board’s hearing.
      - ii. A request for administrative continuance shall be made in writing. It shall describe in adequate detail the need for continuance.

iii. The Plan Director shall evaluate the request and determine if it meets the requirements for granting an administrative continuance, and then grant or deny it.

iv. The Chairperson shall be notified of any administrative continuances prior to the hearing.

b. Requesting a continuance at a public hearing

i. An applicant may request a continuance directly from the Board at a public hearing.

ii. Unless expressly authorized otherwise by the Board, the continuance shall be until the next regularly scheduled hearing of the Board.

2. Subsequent applicant-initiated continuance request

Any continuance request after the initial request shall be made by the applicant directly to the Board at a public hearing.

3. Maximum number and total time of applicant-initiated continuances

a. The maximum number of applicant-initiated continuances granted for any particular agenda item shall be limited to three (3).

b. In no case shall a particular agenda item be continued by an applicant more than 90 days total time.

c. The Board may agree to applicant-initiated continuances in excess of the maximum number permitted, or for more than the total time permitted, or both, if the Board finds that unusual circumstances warrant it.

C. Dismissal of continued items

1. Any agenda item that is unable to proceed to hearing and which has already received the maximum number of continuances, and which has not received a further continuance may have the item dismissed by affirmative vote of the Board.

2. Any agenda item that is unable to proceed to hearing and which has already been continued the maximum number of days and which has not received a further continuance may have that time dismissed by affirmative vote of the Board.

3. A dismissal by the Board does not constitute a denial of the agenda item.

4. Any item dismissed under Section 5.04(D)(1) or 5.04(D)(2) of these Rules shall be eligible for rehearing as a new case with a new case number only after a new application is submitted and all applicable fees have been paid.

D. Withdrawal or denial of continued items

Nothing in these Rules prevents the Board from accepting a withdrawal or, or denying, an agenda item subject to Section 5.04 in lieu of a dismissal if the Board deems it appropriate under the circumstances.

E. Re-notification

1. For any continuance, the Board may require re-notification of property owners within the written notification boundary established under these Rules if doing so serves the public interest.
2. Any continuance granted for more than 60 days shall require re-notification of property owners within the written notification boundary established under these Rules.

**5.05 Hearing Limited to a Reasonable Length of Time**

The Board may cease hearing new cases after 10:30 p.m. Cases not heard shall be placed at the beginning of the agenda of the next regular session of the Board.

**ARTICLE 6 FINAL DISPOSITION OF CASES**

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**6.01 Action by The Board**

- A. Variances of the development standards, Special Exceptions and appeals. Action by the Board on all items that are presented to the Board shall be in the form of approval or denial. The proposal may be voted on as submitted or as modified by the Board. Modifications to the proposal as submitted shall be made part of the motion.
- B. Committee reports, staff reports, staff recommendations. Action by the Board shall take an appropriate form:
  1. Vote to approve or deny
  2. Establish a sense of the Board
  3. Take information without any action
- C. Adverse decisions
  1. Board decision. An application receiving denial from the Board shall not be heard again until six (6) months after the date of the decision of the Board.

2. A proposal that is subject to an adverse decision may be considered for hearing before six (6) months if it is substantially changed from the original. Before the proposal can be placed again on the docket, the Plan Director shall determine if a change sufficient enough to warrant hearing before six (6) months has been made to the proposal.

## 6.02 Findings of Fact

- A. Where appropriate, the Board shall set forth its determinations, recommendations, and conditions of approval with written findings of fact.
- B. Findings of Fact are based on the following:
  1. Development Standards Variances:
    - a. The approval will NOT be injurious to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community
    - b. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will NOT be affected in a substantially adverse manner
    - c. The strict application of the terms of the zoning regulations WOULD result in practical difficulties in the use of the property.
  2. Special Exception:
    - a. The establishment, maintenance or operation of the special exception will NOT be injurious to the public health, safety, or general welfare of the community
    - b. The special exception will NOT affect the use and value of other property in the immediate area in a substantially adverse manner
    - c. The establish of the special exception WILL be consistent with the character of the district (particularly that area immediately adjacent to the special exception) and the permitted land uses
    - d. The Board MAY impose conditions as part of its approval to protect the public health and for reasons of safety, comfort and convenience.
  3. Variance of Use:
    - a. The approval will NOT be injurious to the public health, safety and general welfare of the community

- b. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will NOT be affected in a substantially adverse manner
  - c. The need for the variance arises from some condition peculiar to the property involved
  - d. The strict application of the terms of the zoning regulations WOULD constitute an unnecessary hardship if applied to the property for which the variance is sought
  - e. The approval does NOT interfere substantially with the County Comprehensive Plan.
- C. The signed Findings of Fact are to be submitted to the Board, the petitioner, the Plat Office, and kept on file in the Planning Department.

### **6.03 Dismissal**

- A. The Board may dismiss a case for lack of representation or lack of jurisdiction when an applicant fails to appear at two consecutive meetings.
- B. A case so dismissed shall not be heard again until six (6) months after the date of the decision by the Board.
- C. A proposal so dismissed may be considered for hearing before six (6) months if it is substantially changed from the original. To qualify for a hearing before six (6) months, the Plan Director shall determine if a change sufficient enough to warrant hearing before six (6) months has been made to the proposal.

### **6.04 Withdrawal**

- A. An applicant may withdraw a case by requesting it in writing no less than five (5) days prior to the hearing. A withdrawal so made shall be removed from the Board's agenda by the Secretary. The Chairperson shall be notified of the withdrawal prior to the hearing.
- B. An applicant may appear at a hearing and request the case be withdrawn.
- C. An applicant may not withdraw a case after a vote has been ordered by the Chairperson.
- D. A case that is withdrawn shall not be heard again until three (3) months after the date of the decision by the Board.



- E. A proposal that is withdrawn may be considered for hearing before three (3) months if it is substantially changed from the original. Before the withdrawn proposal can be placed again on the docket, the Plan Director shall determine if a change sufficient enough to warrant hearing before three (3) months has been made to the proposal.

## **ARTICLE 7 MISCELLANEOUS**

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### **7.01 Amendments to These Rules**

- A. Amendments to these Rules may be made by the Board at any regular or special meetings upon the affirmative vote by a majority of the members.
- B. The suspension of any rule may be ordered at any meeting by an affirmative vote of three-quarters of the members present.

### **7.02 Minutes and Records**

- A. The Secretary of the Board shall prepare and maintain minutes of its meetings. The minutes shall include the vote of each member on each question presented or indicate that the member is absent, abstaining with permission, or not voting because of disqualification.
- B. The minutes of the Board meetings and all records shall be filed in the office of the Board and are public records, as defined by IC 5-14-3.
- C. The minutes shall be presented to the Board for approval at the next succeeding regular meeting. When approved, the minutes shall be signed by the Chairperson, attested by the secretary and shall be available for public inspection at the Planning Department and on the Planning Department's website.

## **EFFECTIVE DATE**

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These Rules adopted on the 1st day of January, 2022.