

## **WCGN Zoning Protocols**

(as revised through March 1, 2022)

*As a Registered Community Organization (RCO), West Central Germantown Neighbors ("WCGN") appoints a Zoning Committee to organize RCO meetings for zoning applicants and interested neighbors. The Zoning Committee welcomes development consistent with our vision to preserve the unique history and character of our built environment (see also our WCGN Guidelines for Development). For expedient handling of zoning applications, these protocols spell out the structure of the Zoning Committee, a summary of its operating model, our policy on voting at RCO meetings, and other policies helpful to the applicant such as the potential for a "Pre-Submission Meeting." Please direct any questions to the WCGN Zoning Chair.*

### **1) Zoning Committee**

- a) Committee members must all be WCGN members in good standing.
- b) The Zoning Committee will consist of up to 11 members to be selected by the Zoning Chair. Zoning Committee members serve two-year terms. The Chair will be appointed by WCGN's president in consultation with the Executive Committee, all of whom will have been publicly elected. The Chair can elect interim Zoning Board members to fill empty seats.
- c) The Zoning Chair can remove Zoning Committee members with approval from the WCGN Board.
- d) The Zoning Chair can be removed by the majority vote of the WCGN Board.

### **2) Operating Model**

- a) The Zoning Committee recommendations will reflect the majority vote of those present at the public RCO meeting.
- b) Public hearings will have the following format:
  - i) Attendees will sign in, as further discussed in Voting (§ 3), below.
  - ii) The Zoning Committee will preside over the meeting.
  - iii) The Zoning Committee will announce the agenda.
  - iv) Each applicant will have 15 minutes to present, with more time allowed at the discretion of the Zoning Committee by majority vote.

- v) The Zoning Committee will then have 15 minutes to ask a series of questions to the Applicant, with more time allowed at the discretion of the Zoning Committee by majority vote.
- vi) The Zoning Committee will then have 15 minutes to facilitate a public question and answer session, with more time allowed at the discretion of the Zoning Committee by majority vote.
- vii) Applicant will be asked to leave and attendees will vote, as further discussed in Voting, below.

### 3) Voting

- a) Each attendee who resides or owns a property or business within WCGN's boundaries or has an address included in the City's Notice List, even if such address is not within WCGN's boundaries, shall have **one** vote with the following exception: neither the applicant nor the owner of the subject property, nor anyone affiliated with the applicant or the subject property (e.g., director, officer, employee, sponsor, attorney, architect, consultant), nor any other party with a financial stake in the project, shall be permitted to vote, regardless of residency, ownership status or address.
- b) Voting will be limited to those physically present at the public hearing.
- c) Photo Identification is required at sign-in and verify residence in WCGN. At the Zoning Committee's discretion, "border addresses" will be considered and included in the RCO. Border addresses are hereby defined as those outside WCGN's formal boundaries but nevertheless impacted by the zoning proposal at hand in the discretion of a majority of the zoning committee.
- d) No proxy or absentee ballots will be granted. Interested neighbors unable to attend are reminded, however, of their option to write directly to the ZBA or attend ZBA's public hearing to voice their opinion.
- e) Voting will be cast on **private ballot**. The private ballot voting procedure is as follows:
  - i) At sign in, all attendees will be given a form with the following information:
    - (1) Name and address
    - (2) Renter vs owner
    - (3) Whether received physical (not email) notice of the meeting

(4) Member vs non-member of WCGN

- ii) Upon filling out the above form, each attendee will be given a blank ballot with the information below. "Near neighbors," as indicated by the City's "to be noticed" list of near neighbors will be given a distinct color ballot, such that near neighbor votes can be collected and reported to the ZBA.

(1) Support or Oppose

(2) Comments

- f) Private ballots can be cast anytime after Zoning Committee questions.

#### **4) Applicant Pre-Submission Meeting**

The Zoning Committee may seek to convene Pre-Submission Meetings with all Applicants. The Pre-Submission Meeting will be made public on the WCGN website and listserv such that all interested neighbors can attend.

#### **5) Near-neighbor notification**

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to notify near neighbors. The Zoning Committee shall endeavor to ensure all near neighbors know of the meeting (i.e. compare "required to be noticed" list from the City with actual impacted addresses and get physical notice to anyone missed).

#### **6) WCGN Guidelines for Development**

Applicants should refer to the *WCGN Guidelines for Development* laying out what the neighbors/zoning committee has historically supported in terms of density, design, historic preservation, diversity of housing types, preference for home-ownership, etc., attached as Exhibit B.

#### **7) Virtual Meetings**

The City of Philadelphia has recognized that, during the Covid-19 pandemic, it may be necessary or desirable to hold public RCO meetings in virtual format. The Zoning Committee will have the authority, during the Covid-19 pandemic, (i) to hold virtual public RCO meetings and (ii) to adjust the above procedures as it deems reasonably

necessary to conduct a public RCO meeting in virtual format. The Zoning Committee will keep a written record of its virtual public RCO meeting procedures.