

Draft
Procedures for Planning Board Site Walks

Purpose: The primary purpose of a site walk is to orient the Planning Board to the physical characteristics of the site and the anticipated changes to the site resulting from the proposed development.

1. Site walks are scheduled by the Planning Board at regularly scheduled meetings and are posted on the town website. The date of the site walk shall be selected for the convenience of Planning Board members and the applicant. In unique circumstances, the Planning Board may schedule a site walk at other than a public meeting only when there are scheduling constraints, to reschedule a postponed site walk, or to avoid inclement weather. In these circumstances, the site walk must be placed on the town website at least X days before the site walk.
2. Site walks are typically scheduled after a project has been deemed complete so that the Planning Board has the benefit of a plan before them when they walk the site. Site walks may be scheduled prior to a submission for completeness to avoid inclement weather, in which case the applicant shall provide a sketch plan for reference by Planning Board members.
3. The applicant and/or applicant's representative must attend the site walk and be prepared to identify significant land marks, such as wetland boundaries and property lines, and prominent locations of the proposed project, such as the center line of proposed roadways and building envelopes.
4. Members of the public are welcome to attend site walks. No separate mailed notice of a site walk is required. Members of the public may only ask questions through the Planning Board Chair. Questions should be directly related to the physical characteristics of the site or the location of the proposed project. No substantive comments in support or opposition of the proposed project should be made at the site walk. Substantive comments should be saved for regular meetings of the Planning Board where a public record of comments will be prepared.
5. Planning Board members should try to attend all site walks. If a Board member cannot attend a site walk, he/she may request a "make-up" site walk with the Town Planner or visit the site on their own. Planning Board members should not speak with the applicant or abutters at any "make-up site walk."

6. The Planning Board Chair runs the site walk. At the beginning the site walk, Board members should identify any specific areas that they want to see as part of the site walk. The applicant is responsible for guiding participants on the site.
7. A site walk is a public meeting and therefore subject to right-to-know laws. Planning Board members should stay together during site walks and avoid the appearance of private conversations that might be construed as ex parte communications. Discussions as a group may occur as long as decisions are not made. Questions such as the location of boundaries, wetlands, proposed roads and proposed building envelopes and buildings are typical. Comments regarding possible adjustments to plans related to physical features on the site are appropriate. Comments indicating a decision by individuals or the Planning Board as a group are not appropriate and should be reserved for regular meetings of the Planning Board.