

Amendments to “Tree Conservation Commission Appeal Procedure” for  
Remote Virtual Hearings

When necessary and pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, O.C.G.A. 50-14-1, hearings may be held via Zoom, or another virtual teleconferencing platform, using the current Tree Conservation Commission Appeal Procedures for in-person hearings with the following amendments:

(1) Submission of Appeal Materials:

- a. Applicants will be required to submit materials one week prior to a hearing to the Tree Conservation Commission via email [treeappeals@atlantaga.gov](mailto:treeappeals@atlantaga.gov). Materials will be time stamped in the email inbox. Materials may be accepted two hours prior to the hearing by submitting the materials to the Commission meetings email inbox *only* if the supporting evidence is shown not to be available one week prior to the hearing and if the Commission votes to make the materials a part of the record at the hearing.
- b. Commission members will be sent application materials/documents via email prior to the hearing, per the normal business practice.

(2) Hearing Procedures:

- a. The public will be required to pre-register through Zoom to enter the Zoom meeting. The registration form will require (1) the address of the property for the appeal they wish to speak to or observe and (2) their name and address.
- b. At the beginning of the meeting, all parties will be asked to mute their microphone until they are recognized by the Chair to speak.
- c. Potential third parties will be allowed to speak for or against a case by raising their hand in Zoom or selecting #9 on their phone. A “breakout room” will also be offered so those speaking may caucus and divide their time.
- d. When unmuted, all speakers are required to state their full name, and address. Per the Tree Conservation Commission’s Appeal Procedures, five minutes are allotted for speakers. Additional time may be requested prior to giving testimony with approval by a vote of the Commissioners.
- e. Hearing presentations will be managed by staff during the meeting.
- f. As needed, to limit talking over each other, the Chair will acknowledge a Commission member who wishes to speak or ask questions.
- g. Before each vote Commission members will do a roll call to ensure a quorum or the Commission members will share their screen to ensure a quorum.
- h. The Chair or Secretary will ask each member to state their vote orally for the record on each application considered.
- i. Applicants and the public may sign off/hang up from the hearing after their appeal is heard.

(3) Recording/Reporting:

- a. Meetings will be recorded (visual and audio) in Zoom, and by a court reporter, as per the Tree Protection Ordinance.
- b. Commission decisions will be posted on the Department of City Planning’s webpage.

(4) Contingency Planning:

- a. Department of City Planning staff will continually plan for contingencies as the remote meetings progress but at a minimum the following must be implemented:
  - i. If a person is disconnected, the Chair will attempt to reconnect the meeting or person and business shall resume from the point of disconnection.
  - ii. If an appellant cannot be reconnected within three minutes, the Chair will move that matter to the end of the meeting and staff will continue to attempt to contact the appellant. Where the appellant cannot be reconnected at that meeting, the Commission will postpone hearing that matter to the next available hearing.
  - iii. If the feed for the entire meeting is lost and cannot be reconnected, the Chair will adjourn the meeting.
- b. Commission members and participants will be encouraged to provide feedback on technology issues and other issues that may improve the remote meeting process.