



To: Alan Webber, Mayor
Jarel LaPan Hill, City Manager
From: League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County
Date: July 22, 2020
Re: Information on the City Website about Public Meetings

Mayor Webber and Ms. LaPan Hill:

The League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County is of course aware that the current pandemic has required the City to rapidly implement changes in procedures regarding meetings of City boards and committees. As with many if not all implementations of new procedures, there is a learning curve. After a few months of experience with virtual meetings, however, we are concerned about public access to information about public meetings as well as conflicting information about how to participate in meetings.

The Historic Districts Review Board is one example of conflicting information, specifically on how a city resident can submit public comments in writing or by phone.

The HDRB website https://www.santafenm.gov/historic_districts_review_board says that written comments for any HDRB meeting, held on Tuesdays, can be submitted either by email or by postal mail and are due by the Thursday before. That would mean that the meeting must be noticed and the agenda made be available at least 2 days before that deadline to allow time for mail delivery. There appears to be no way for a member of the public to submit documents other than in advance via postal mail or as email attachments; therefore, it is especially important that information on how and when to submit written comments is accurate and available with sufficient lead time in relation to when the agenda for the meeting is available.

The HDRB web page includes these instructions for phone and written comments:

Public Comment:

By phone: A person attending the Zoom meeting by phone may provide public comment during the meeting by pressing *9 to raise their hand during the case for which they wish to make comments.

In writing: A person may submit written public comments in advance of the meeting by email (landusepubliccomment@santafenm.gov) or U.S. Postal Service (City of Santa Fe, ATTN: Lani McCulley, PO Box 909, Santa Fe, NM 87504-0909). Please include your full name and address, and identify the specific agenda item you are commenting on. To be included in the official record and considered at the hearing, written public comment **must** be received no later than the Thursday prior to the hearing.

In contrast, the Weekly Meeting List (week of 7/13-7/17), for the July 14 HDRB meeting, we found the following instructions:

Public Comment:

- By phone: A person attending the Zoom meeting by phone may provide public comment during the meeting but must provide advance notice to City staff. Please contact Lani McCulley (505-365-3055, ljmcculley@santafenm.gov) **no later than Friday, July 10, 2020**, and provide your full name, address, and the phone number you will be using to call in to the teleconference. Without your phone number, the chair will not be able to recognize you to speak at the meeting.
- In writing: A person may submit written public comments in advance of the meeting by email (LandUsePublicComment@santafenm.gov) or U.S. Postal Service (City of Santa Fe, ATTN: Lani McCulley, PO Box 909, Santa Fe, NM 87504-0909). Please include your full name and address, and identify the specific agenda item you are commenting on. To be included in the official record and considered at the hearing, written public comment must be received **no later than Friday, July 10, 2020**.

On the Posted Agendas Bulletin Board for the HDRB July 28 meeting, https://www.santafenm.gov/posted_agendas_bulletin_board, the instructions match the Friday deadline in the instructions for the July 14 meeting:

Public Comment:

- By phone: A person attending the Zoom meeting by phone may provide public comment during the meeting but must provide advance notice to City staff. Please contact Lani McCulley (505-365-3055, ljmcculley@santafenm.gov) no later than Friday, July 24, 2020, and provide your full name, address, and the phone number you will be using to call in to the teleconference. Without your phone number, the chair will not be able to recognize you to speak at the meeting.
- In writing: A person may submit written public comments in advance of the meeting by email (LandUsePublicComment@santafenm.gov) or U.S. Postal Service (City of Santa Fe, ATTN: Lani McCulley, PO Box 909, Santa Fe, NM 87504-0909). Please include your full name and address, and identify the specific agenda item you are commenting on. To be included in the official record and considered at the hearing, written public comment must be received no later than Friday, July 24, 2020.

Depending on where a resident looks for instructions, he or she might well miss the requirements for comments. For written comments, we understand that deadlines may differ for different boards or committees – for example, the Governing Body instructions say written comments will be accepted until 8am the day of the meeting – but we expect consistency within each group. For comments by phone, the instructions are quite different between the website and the agendas.

We did not search through similar instructions for all boards and committees that allow public input, but we strongly suggest that you ensure that each one review its language related to public comments so that members of the public find timely and consistent information.

An example of careless instructions appeared July 20 for the MPO Technical Coordinating Committee where the deadlines for phone notification and written comments are clearly from a previous meeting.

Public Comment:

- By phone: A person attending the Zoom meeting by phone may provide public comment during the meeting but **must** provide advance notice to MPO staff. Please contact Erick Aune (505-955-6664) ejaune@santafenm.gov) no later than Monday, May 25, 2020, and provide your **full name, address, and the phone number** you will be using to call in to the teleconference. Without your phone number, the chair will not be able to recognize you to speak at the meeting.

• In writing: A person may submit written public comments in advance of the meeting by email (ejaune@santafenm.gov), by U.S. Postal Service (City of Santa Fe, ATTN: Erick Aune/MPO Officer, PO Box 909, Santa Fe, NM 87504-0909), or by dropping off a comment at the physical drop box which will be located outside City Hall at the entrance to Land Use Lobby facing Marcy Street. Please include your full name and address, and identify the specific agenda item you are commenting on. To be included in the official record and considered at the hearing, written public comment **must** be received no later than Monday, May 25, 2020.

In addition, during our review of the HDRB information, we observed additional links on the city website that need attention. Two of these are described briefly below.

- 1) Under Hot Topics, there is a link for PrimeGov (Agendas and Packets). Clicking on that selection goes to a blank page. It appears that the correct link is <https://santafe.primegov.com/portal/search>. Also, the Quality of Life Committee agenda for its July 15 meeting included a link to the PrimeGov site <https://santafe.primegov.com/>, but clicking on the link goes to a page that asks for a login. We understand that some League members get nothing but a blank page with either of these links.
- 2) On the Current Agendas and Most Recent Minutes page https://www.santafenm.gov/agendas_minutes, the most recent entries appear to date from 2014-2016 (again, we did not check each board or committee). This is not what one would expect based on the title.

We know that the City administration intends to offer comprehensive and accurate information to the public consistent with its pledge to be transparent. We hope that the information we've included here is helpful in making it easier for residents to access information and become active participants in our City government.

Sincerely,



Christine Furlanetto, Chair
LWVSFC Action & Advocacy Committee