

# Zoning Hearing Application Help Document

General Information, Checklist and Hints to Complete an Application

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## General Information

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- Use this Help Document to assist you in completing Applications for Hearing Before the Zoning Hearing Board. **It is the obligation of the applicant to clearly establish that the proposed project satisfies the criteria for a Variance or Special Exception.**
- Do not use this checklist for Subdivision and Land Development applications
- Failure to provide all required information may cause delay
- Planning Staff is available to help understand the County Comprehensive Plan, zoning ordinance, application documents, and to assist the applicant. However, staff refrains from providing technical arguments and cannot complete any portion of the application, on behalf of the applicant. Staff is not permitted to assist in preparing arguments for or against a request.
- Applicants may wish to consult with a land-use attorney or consultant prior to submitting an application. Use of an attorney or consultant is at the discretion of the applicant. Staff is not permitted to make a recommendation.

### The following must be submitted:

- 1. Filing Fees**  
Cash, check or money order payable to the Schuylkill County Treasurer  
<http://www.co.schuylkill.pa.us/Offices/PlanningZoning/FeesApplications/Schuylkill%20County%20Zoning%20Permit%20Fee%20Schedule.pdf>
- 2. Zoning Hearing Application**  
Completed with original (preferably blue ink) signatures
- 3. Proof of Interest**  
If the applicant is not the land owner of record, information must be presented to demonstrate that the applicant has the legal right to make the application
- 4. Additional Information for Non-Residential Applications**  
Additional Information, as detailed in the instructions below, must be included for non-residential applications

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## Guide to Completing the Application

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- 1. Type of Request**  
Identify the type of application request being made

- 2. Subject Property**

**Item 1 – Assessor’s Property Number:** This number can be obtained from two locations (a) your tax bill or (b) from the County’s Parcel Locator at [www.co.schuylkill.pa.us/parcelviewer](http://www.co.schuylkill.pa.us/parcelviewer)

**Item 2 – Zoning District:** This can be obtained from the County’s Parcel Locator at [www.co.schuylkill.pa.us/parcelviewer](http://www.co.schuylkill.pa.us/parcelviewer)

**Item 3 – Property Address:** The complete address assigned by the United States Post Office must be provided. If the subject parcel is a vacant lot for which no Post Office address has been assigned provide the address for the property that can be found on (a) your tax bill or (b) from the property location listed on the

County's Parcel Locator at [www.co.schuylkill.pa.us/parcelviewer](http://www.co.schuylkill.pa.us/parcelviewer)

**Item 4 – Municipality:** Identify the Borough or Township in which the property is located. Note, that in some cases the city in the property address and the municipality may be different (i.e. Palo Alto Borough has a mailing address city of Pottsville)

**Items 5, 6, 7 - Lot Area, Lot Width, Lot Depth:** Self-explanatory. Make sure to enter the dimensions in the correct units (square feet, feet)

**Item 8 – Name of Business or Establishment:** Self-explanatory. If not applicable, write "N/A"

**3. Prior ZHB Action**

List any and all prior Zoning Hearing Board Action regarding the property. List the date, permit number issued (if applicable) and the nature of the zoning relief granted. A list of all permits issued can be found here: <http://www.co.schuylkill.pa.us/Offices/PlanningZoning/PlanningZoning.asp>

**4. Present Use**

Describe the present use of the property. Is it residential, a retail store, an office, a working farm? Identify existing improvements on the property. Identify the principal structure. Are there any accessory structures (i.e. garage, shed, in-ground swimming pools)?

**5. Proposed Uses**

**Item 1 – Non-Residential Use?:** If the proposed use is non-residential additional items are required to be submitted. *See Site Plan Information Below*

**A Site Plan to include:**

- Locations, dimensions and uses of existing and proposed structures, parking and loading areas, and locations of existing proposed uses of areas of land, with existing features clearly distinguished from proposed features
- Notes showing the dimensions of all buildings from lot lines and street right-of-way
- Locations of any watercourses and any 100 year floodplain
- Proposed lot areas, lot widths and other applicable dimensional requirements
- Locations and widths of existing and proposed sidewalks
- A north arrow and scale
- Approximate locations of principal buildings and locations of streets and alleys and zoning district boundaries within 100 feet of the boundaries of the tract, and description of uses of adjoining properties (i.e. "drug store", "single family dwelling")
- Heights, locations, methods of illumination and intensity of exterior lighting and sign lighting
- Name and address of person who prepared the site plan
- Any other additional information required under applicable sections of the Ordinance

**A Description of the following (attach as additional sheet)**

- A description of the proposed non-residential operations and storage in sufficient detail to indicate potential nuisances and hazards regarding noise, large truck traffic, glare, odors, dust, fire or toxic explosive hazards or other significant public health and safety hazards
- A list of the maximum hours of operation

**Item 2 – Proposed Use:** Describe the proposed improvements, additions, or change of use. For physical changes to the lot or structures, indicate the size of the improvements, and general construction to be carried out. *For non-residential applications, a site plan is required. See #1 above.*

HINTS...

- ✓ While not required for residential applications, a site plan or sketch for illustration would be helpful.
- ✓ If a business, describe daily or seasonal operations; number of employees, customers, visitors; number of shifts; activities; products and services, as applicable

**6. Relief Requested**

State the variance, special exception, or other relief requested. Cite the appropriate section(s) of the Zoning Ordinance. The ordinance can be found

here: <http://www.co.schuylkill.pa.us/Offices/PlanningZoning/Plans/Ordinance/SchuylkillCountyZoningOrdinance.pdf>

Identify the reasons for which the proposed improvements or use does not meet the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. If seeking a variance, describe why the proposed variance represents the *minimum relief* necessary for reasonable use of the property.

**7. Physical Characteristics Creating Hardship**

Describe the unique physical circumstances or conditions (including irregularity, narrowness, or shallowness of lot size of shape, or exceptional topographical or other physical conditions peculiar to the particular property).

Identify how the unique physical circumstances or conditions create an unnecessary hardship. Be specific as to why it is the uniqueness of the physical characteristics and no other provisions of the ordinance, which have created the hardship.

**8. Consistency with Surrounding Neighborhood.**

Describe how the proposed change/use will be consistent with the character and type of development surrounding the property location. Explain why the proposed change would/would not alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

HINTS...

- ✓ Explain how your request complies with the Zoning Ordinance
- ✓ Give details about how your request supports policies and goals of the County Comprehensive plan, found here <http://www.co.schuylkill.pa.us/Offices/PlanningZoning/Plans.asp#Here>
- ✓ Discuss how your project is consistent with the scale, bulk, or density of the surrounding area. Address how the project will be integrated with and complement the neighborhood.

**9. Suitability for Use**

Describe how the property would be suitable for any new or expanded use. Applicants seeking a variance should identify how the proposed project would not substantially or permanently impair the appropriate use or development of adjacent property, nor be detrimental to the public welfare. Those applicants seeking a Special Exception should address the following:

- (1) Establish that the traffic from the proposed use will be accommodated in a safe and efficient manner that will minimize hazards and congestion
- (2) Establish that the proposed use will not create a significant hazard to the public health and safety, such as fire, toxic or explosive hazards
- (3) Establish that the proposed use will be suitable for the site, considering the disturbance of steep slopes, mature woodland, wetlands, floodplains, springs and other important features.

HINTS...

- ✓ If you lived next door to the proposed project, what might be your concerns?

- ✓ Explain why your project is essential or a desirable benefit to the community.
- ✓ Could your project increase noise, odors, dust, glare, produce fire hazards, etc? Explain how you address these concerns. Are there hazardous materials used or produced? Discuss how you will handle these materials.
- ✓ Discuss how your project is adequate in size and shape to accommodate parking, landscaping or any other requirements

**10. Impact on Traffic or Parking**

Describe how the proposed change/use will impact existing traffic, parking and the pedestrian environment and your plans to mitigate these impacts.

HINTS...

- ✓ Often, projects will increase traffic and parking demands. What are your plans for parking and vehicle traffic?

**11. Property Owners**

Only complete if the applicant is different than the property owner(s). If the applicant is not the landowner of record, information must be presented (i.e. agreement of sale or lease), to demonstrate that the applicant has the legal right to make the application.

**12. Applicant**

If the applicant is not the landowner of record, information must be presented (i.e. agreement of sale or lease), to demonstrate that the applicant has the legal right to make the application.

**13. Applicant's Attorney**

Use of an attorney or consultant is at the discretion of the applicant. If the applicant elects to be represented by legal counsel, please provide the name and contact information so that counsel may be copied on correspondence from the Office and the Zoning Hearing Board.

**14. Owner / Applicant Certification**

If the applicant and property owners are different, both must sign the application.