

HAMBURG PLANNING BOARD FAQs

Q: What does the Planning Board do, and where and when does it meet?

A: The Planning Board is responsible for decisions on land use planning in Hamburg and specifically subdivision and site plan review and approval, advice toward revisions of the Comprehensive Plan and the review and granting of special use permits. Approvals of the Planning Board are independent of those of the Town Board. The Planning Board meets for a Work Session at 6:30 PM., followed by a Regular Meeting at 7:00 PM on the first and third Wednesdays of each month in Room 7B of Hamburg Town Hall.

Q: Who are the members, and who appoints them?

A: The Planning Board consists of seven (7) members, each a resident of the Town of Hamburg and appointed by the Town Board. At meetings, the Board is supported by two (2) planning consultants, an attorney and the Town Assistant Municipal Engineer.

Q: How do I find out what projects are being considered by the Planning Board and what the Board has discussed and taken action on at past meetings?

A: The agendas for upcoming meetings and the approved minutes of past meeting are posted on the Town's website (www.townofhamburgny.com). In addition, all agendas and minutes are published in the legal newspaper (Lackawanna Front Page). You may also visit the Planning Department in Town Hall to obtain a copy of an agenda or minutes.

Q: I own residential property in Hamburg that I'd like to build on. Do I need Planning Board approval?

A: Generally, if your land is zoned residential and you want to build a single-family home or duplex and can adhere to all applicable codes, you will not need any Planning Board input. However, if your project involves subdividing your property, you will need to apply for Planning Board approval of the subdivision of land. If a multi-family or business development project is planned, Planning Board approval is required. So if you are contemplating building or remodeling, your first step should be to visit the Building Department in Town Hall to discuss your plans.

Q: Why is the Town building a shopping center or housing development near my home?

A: It's not. The Town does not solicit development projects. Almost all projects are proposed and built by landowners or private developers. These projects must meet all applicable federal, state and local ordinances in order to be approved, which is what the Planning Board helps ensure.

Q: But why did the Planning Board approve that shopping center or housing development?

A: Every property owner has the right to develop his or her property, subject to the law. The Planning Board is tasked with making sure that a proposed project is a permitted use in the

zone in which the property is located, and if it is zoned correctly, the Planning Board helps ensure that the laws and regulations governing development in Hamburg are met.

Q: I have questions or concerns regarding a development project being proposed in Hamburg. May I attend Planning Board meetings to learn more and ask questions or offer comments?

A: Absolutely. The Planning Board encourages anyone interested in a project to attend any of its meetings. All Planning Board meetings are open to the public.

Q: I'd like to comment on a proposal before the Planning Board. How can I do so?

A: Either written or verbal public comments are always welcomed by the Planning Board.

Q: May I contact Planning Board members personally regarding questions or concerns I have?

A: No. To ensure fairness and complete transparency to all involved, Planning Board members only discuss details of any project in public during their meetings.

Q: Is the Planning Board part of the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)?

A: No. The ZBA is an entirely separate entity from the Planning Board.

Q: What is the Comprehensive Plan?

A: The *Town of Hamburg 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update* is the primary resource that guides the Town Board in determining whether a parcel of land is zoned correctly. The plan is reviewed and updated about every five (5) years to make sure it accurately reflects the needs of the Town for planned, effective development.