

Town of Sweden, Maine Planning Board

REMOTE PARTICIPATION POLICY

Adopted February 15, 2022

Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. § 403-B, and after public notice and hearing, the Town of Sweden Planning Board (the “Board”) adopts the following policy to govern the participation, via remote methods, of members of Board and the public in the public proceedings or meetings of the Board.

Members of the body are expected to be physically present for meetings except when not practicable, such as (1) in the case of an emergency or urgent issue that requires the entire Board to meet via remote methods, or (2) an illness or other physical condition or temporary absence of a Board member that causes that Board member significant difficulty traveling to or attending the meeting in person.

Any Board member for whom it is not practicable to attend a meeting in person will notify the Board chair or the Board chair’s designee as far in advance as reasonably possible. The Board chair, or the Board chair’s designee will make a final determination that remote methods of participation are necessary for the entire Board (a “fully remote meeting”) or for one or more Board members (a “hybrid meeting”) in as timely a manner as reasonably possible under the circumstances.

Remote methods of participation during a fully remote or hybrid meeting are limited to telephonic or video technology allowing simultaneous reception of information and may include other means necessary to provide reasonable accommodation to a person with a disability. Remote participation will not be by text-only means such as e-mail, text messages, or chat functions.

The public will be provided a meaningful opportunity to attend a fully remote or hybrid meeting via remote methods. If public input is allowed or required at the meeting, an effective means of communication between the Board and the public will also be provided. For a hybrid meeting, the public will also be provided an opportunity to attend the meeting in person.

Notice of all meetings will be provided in accordance with 1 M.R.S. § 406 and any applicable Town ordinance, policy, or bylaw. Notice of fully remote or hybrid meetings will include the means by which the public may access the meeting remotely and will provide a method for persons with a disability to request reasonable accommodations to access the meeting. Notice will also identify a location where the public may attend hybrid meetings in person.

Public attendance will only be limited exclusively to remote methods in the case of a fully remote meeting. The Board will make all documents and materials to be considered by the Board during a hybrid or fully remote meeting available, electronically or otherwise, to the public who attend remotely to the same extent customarily available to the public who attend in person, provided no additional costs are incurred by the Board.

All votes taken during a fully remote or hybrid meeting will be by roll call vote that can be seen and heard if using video technology, or heard if using audio technology only, by members of the Board and the public. Any member of the Board who participates remotely is considered present for purposes of a quorum and voting.

This policy will remain in force indefinitely unless amended or rescinded by the Board.