

Palliser Intermunicipal Subdivision and Development Appeal Board

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES



June 2019

2021Nov23_ New MGA Rulings: Authority to hear the appeal

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PART A: THE BOARD & PANELS

General

1. The Board is an independent quasi-judicial tribunal. Within the mandate of the *Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26*, as amended and the Intermunicipal Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB) Bylaw, as amended, the Board controls its own process and procedure at all times.
2. The Board has established a process as set out in these Guidelines that will better enable the Board to effectively and efficiently decide appeals. The Board may, however, deviate from these Guidelines when hearing a particular appeal with or without notice to the parties.
3. All proper names/references shall have the same meaning as defined in the Intermunicipal Subdivision and Development Appeal Board Bylaw.
4. The municipalities may establish an Advisory Committee to review this Procedures Guideline and other matters pertinent to the Board's function.

Intermunicipal SDAB Composition

1. The SDAB Members shall be comprised of persons from the participating municipalities.
2. Appointments to the SDAB shall be made by resolution approved from time to time by the Councils of the participating municipalities. All resolutions shall be submitted to Palliser Regional Municipal Services (PRMS), who will maintain a SDAB Member register with current contact information.
3. If a participating municipality decides not to appoint their own individual member to the Board, the municipality may still access the SDAB Members to assemble a panel for a hearing.
4. If a vacancy occurs, the SDAB will continue to operate with the existing appointed Board members until such time as a new person is appointed to the SDAB.

Bias and Pecuniary Interest

1. All Board members must consider perceived influence or bias and conduct themselves in an impartial manner based on the principles of judicial fairness.
2. If a Board member's presence may affect the deliberations on the appeal or affect the outcome in any way, the member should consider making a declaration and excluding themselves from further discussion. This declaration should be noted for the record.
3. A Board member must listen to the appeal with an open mind and without being influenced by factors outside of the evidence and arguments of the parties participating in the appeal.
4. A Board member with a financial interest in the appeal should also declare this interest and exclude him or herself from the hearing. The conflict of interest rules under section 172 of the *Municipal Government Act* should be used as a guideline for a SDAB member.

5. If a Board member is challenged prior to or at a hearing, the panel will recess to consider the information in closed session and will make a determination regarding the Board member's ability to participate in the hearing and the reason for or against shall be recorded for the record.

The Panel

1. The Board hears appeals in groups called Panels. A decision of the Panel is a decision of the Board.
2. Panels of the Board have a minimum number of members. This minimum number of members is called the "quorum".
3. More than one Panel may be convened at any one time and Board Members of the SDAB may participate as a member of more than one Panel at the same time.
4. Members of the Board will be listed on the PRMS website and participating municipalities may list the Board member names on their web or social media sites.
5. Any concern about the makeup of a Panel for a particular appeal must be raised as soon as possible or at the beginning of the hearing.
6. A Panel, in consultation with the Coordinator/Clerk, will set the date for the hearing to continue or provide some procedural directions. Once a Panel starts hearing the merits of an appeal, that Panel will remain the same throughout the hearing.
7. Where possible, a Panel convened for a hearing should consist of the appointed members from the municipality in which the appeal is held and with the remainder of the Panel to be from the regional pool.
8. No more than one elected official may sit on a Panel to hear an appeal.
9. If for any reason a member of the Panel cannot continue to participate in a hearing, the hearing may proceed without that member but only if enough other members are present to still achieve quorum. If not, the hearing will be adjourned and may be re-heard by a new Panel.
10. The deliberation by a panel regarding the decision are to be held in closed session.

The Panel Chair

1. The Panel members shall elect one of themselves as Panel Chair (Chair) for the purpose of a hearing. The Chair may be a member from the municipality in which the appeal is located.
2. The Chair shall be responsible to ensure the Panel carries out the responsibilities in accordance with the provision of the *Municipal Government Act* and the SDAB bylaw.
3. The Chair has the authority to conduct a hearing as they determine suitable, but shall act on the principles of unbiasedness, impartiality, and judicial fairness.
4. The Chair may call a recess to allow members to read materials, rest after a long series of presentations, take time for meals or personal needs of the Panel, or to settle down the meeting participants after a contentious presentation or if someone must be removed from the hearing.

5. Prior to adjourning, the Chair should ensure that the other members of the Panel have adequate facts to develop the reasons for their decisions and to formulate the decision.
6. The chair or his designate is responsible for signing the decision of the Panel.

Roles of the Panel

1. Panel members should be careful not to speak out of turn and shall speak at the direction of the Chair.
2. All Panel members need to be aware of their potential for or perception of conflict of interest and bias. If the impression is created that the member might benefit directly or indirectly from the ruling of the SDAB or that there has been a previous association with a party to the appeal, the member should not participate in the hearing.
3. The Panel should not see itself as solving people's problems. It is not an advocate and should not be perceived as such. This restriction also applies to providing any advice that may relate to the issues of the case. Any advisory function should be handled by informed professionals, which may include the municipal staff.
4. The role of any SDAB member is to participate in the hearing process and to help ensure that decisions are made in a fair, impartial, and timely manner.

Responsibilities of the Panel

1. Before the hearing, Panel members **must be**:
 - a) informed about their legislative and quasi-judicial responsibilities;
 - b) familiar with the relevant provincial legislation and policy including but not limited to the Alberta Land Stewardship Act, zMunicipal Government Act and the Subdivision and Development Regulation;
 - c) familiar with the applicable municipal plans, policies and bylaws including but not limited to the municipal development plan, area structure plans, area redevelopment plans, land use bylaw and the SDAB bylaw; and
 - d) familiar with exhibit package as circulated before the hearing, and review the material to become familiar with the circumstances of the case.
2. Before the hearing, Panel members **must not**:
 - a) speak with the appellant or any other parties prior to the appeal (the SDAB member may only advise people contact the clerk and to attend the hearing in order to make their views known);
 - b) discuss the item being appealed with anyone, including other SDAB members, outside the hearing;
 - c) conduct independent research including site visits; or
 - d) form a conclusion prior to attending the hearing.
3. Panel members should refrain from discussing appeals with municipal staff except within the context of the open hearing.
4. The Panel members must be present for the entire hearing of a specific appeal. Members cannot be substituted for other members during the hearing. Members should ensure that they do not leave

the hearing room during the hearing and any member who leaves during the hearing may not return or participate in the decision in any way, if the hearing has continued without the member.

5. Only those Panel members present during the entire length of the discussion, pertaining to a matter being considered at a hearing, shall participate in the decision deliberations.
6. The decision of the majority of the Panel members present at a meeting shall be deemed to be the decision of the whole Subdivision and Development Appeal Board.
7. The Panel members participating in an appeal decision will try to reach a decision by consensus, and in the case where consensus cannot be reached, a decision shall be made in favor of the majority of the members.

Panel Conduct at the Hearing

1. Panel members must be respectful and yield the operation of the hearing to the Panel Chair and may ask questions during the hearing only with the permission of the Chair.
2. At the hearing, Panel members should:
 - a) follow fair procedure and act in accordance with the rules of natural justice;
 - b) take notes to ensure that issues or evidence provided in the hearing is addressed in findings of fact, the reasons for the decision, or the decision; and
 - c) hear from all parties in a hearing in a fair, open, and objective manner.
3. Panel members are expected to listen attentively to each individual case and to understand the perspective presented.
4. The Panel shall attempt to create an atmosphere where all parties feel they have been dealt with in a considerate and respectful manner.

Communications with the Panel

1. All submissions and other communications with the Panel before the hearing shall be directed to the Clerk.
2. The Clerk shall contact Panel members as necessary before, during and after a hearing.
3. The Panel shall not communicate with the parties involved regarding the merits of an appeal outside of the hearing.
4. After the hearing closes, the Panel shall not accept any further submissions.
5. Parties should ensure that any submissions made to the Panel are copied to all of the parties involved in the appeal. Any response from the Panel through the Clerk will be shared with all other parties and will be made available to the public.
6. Panel members must not discuss an appeal outside of the hearing. All inquiries shall be directed to the Clerk and any response provided by the Clerk is informational only, is not a decision of the Panel, and is not legal or other advice.

PART B: COORDINATOR

Role of the Appeal Coordinator

1. Palliser Regional Municipal Services will assign a Coordinator (staff member of PRMS) to the Board to handle administrative duties of the Board.
2. The Coordinator shall assign a Clerk(s) to a specific appeal.
3. The Coordinator shall keep a master list of all qualified Board members, their contact information and training status.
4. The Coordinator shall monitor the activity of the Board in the form of a yearly report to the PRMS Board and upon establishment to an Advisory Committee. The report should include, but is not limited to:
 - a) the number of appeals,
 - b) the Board members participating in appeals,
 - c) Board members not able to attend hearings, and
 - d) Board members who fail to attend hearings.
5. The Coordinator, with the assistance of the Clerk is responsible for preparing the final invoicing and master file for the municipality. The master file shall include a copy of the appeal letter/form, the notice(s), the complete exhibit package, the decision and the record of proceedings.

PART C: CLERKS

Assembling a Panel to Hear an Appeal

1. The authority to assemble a Panel to hear a particular appeal shall be designated to the Clerk assigned to a particular appeal.
2. The Clerk is to choose duly appointed members from the SDAB for hearings with the following guidelines for composition of a Panel:
 - a) as a first step, if there is a Board member(s) from the municipality in which the appeal originates, the Clerk shall contact and confirm their availability to participate in the hearing. If they are unavailable, subsection 2(b) applies;
 - b) as a second step, the Clerk shall contact Board members who live in closest physical proximity to the municipality in which the appeal originates, expanding the distance until the Panel is filled.

Responsibilities of the Clerk

1. The Clerk is responsible to report any changes in Board member contact information to the Coordinator.
2. The duties of the Clerk before the hearing include:
 - a) ensure that the appeal has been properly filed;
 - b) coordinate the date, time and venue of the hearing;
 - c) contact members to ensure quorum;
 - d) prepare a notice of hearing and ensure that the appropriate people are informed of appeal (including the appellant, affected persons, and anyone else identified in the land use bylaw and Subdivision and Development Regulation) at least 5 days prior to hearing;
 - e) prepare an exhibit package;
 - f) prepare an agenda for the hearing;
 - g) ensure that all relevant documents and materials are available for public inspection;
 - h) answer any questions of the applicant, appellant, Panel, municipality or public; and
 - i) set up any equipment/materials needed in the SDAB meeting room.
3. The duties of the Clerk at the hearing include:
 - a) circulate a sign in sheet among the gallery;
 - b) provide administrative assistance to the Panel;
 - c) assist the Chair and Panel in the organization and function of the hearing;
 - d) ensure quorum of the SDAB for the hearing;
 - e) announce the appeal at the commencement of the hearing;
 - f) record names of speakers;
 - g) mark submitted exhibits;
 - h) take notes of the appeal; and
 - i) record the attendance and absences of SDAB Panel members.
4. The duties of the Clerk after the hearing include:
 - a) prepare a draft SDAB's decision(s) for the Panel review, edits, and Chair signature;
 - b) circulate the decision in accordance with the notice of hearing and ensure that the appropriate people are informed of the decision (including the appellant, affected persons, municipality, referral agencies, those that spoke at the hearing etc.); and
 - c) prepare and sign a record of proceedings for the appeal file.
5. The Clerk is responsible for keeping track of all expenses related to the appeal and submitting an invoice to the municipality, and the coordinator.

PART D: HEARING PROCEDURES

Commencing Appeals

1. An appeal is commenced by filing a notice of appeal form or letter and paying the applicable filing fee of the municipality in which the appeal originates.
2. There are strict timelines for launching an appeal. Appeals must be submitted per the Municipal Government Act (MGA), for stop orders, subdivision or development appeals, and notice or deemed refusal by the Subdivision or Development Authority. Appellants are encouraged to file as soon as possible within the appeal period.
3. The notice of appeal form should be filled out completely, including a summary of the reasons for the appeal.
4. A person can file an appeal on their own behalf or can authorize an agent, lawyer or other representative to do so on their behalf.
5. If a person is filing an appeal on behalf of someone else, this must be stated in the notice of appeal form. The “appellant” in the notice of appeal form is the person who has the right to appeal, and the “agent” in that form is the person filing on the appellant’s behalf.
6. If a person is representing someone else, they shall be asked to provide written authorization from the person they represent. This applies to any person acting as a representative of an individual, company, society, community association or any other organization.
7. The municipality shall stamp the letter or notice of appeal as being received on the date it is delivered.
8. Appeals received by the municipality will then either:
 - a) request a list of SDAB Members from the Coordinator, so the municipality may Clerk the hearing themselves; or
 - b) request that Appeal Coordinator provide PRMS Clerk services.

Withdrawing an Appeal

1. An appellant may withdraw an appeal at any time before the Panel issues its decision. A withdrawal of an appeal must be explicit and unconditional.
2. If the appellant withdraws the appeal before the hearing begins or after the close of the hearing, but before the Panel issues its decision, the withdrawal must be in writing. An appellant may withdraw an appeal verbally at the hearing.
3. If an appeal is withdrawn before the hearing begins, any refunds of the municipal appeal fee shall be at the discretion of the municipality in which the appeal originates.

Scheduling a Hearing

1. The municipality, in which the appeal originates, is responsible to contact the Coordinator within 2 working days when an appeal is received in their municipality.

2. Once an appeal has been received, the assigned Clerk will schedule the hearing to begin within 30 days of the receipt date. The Clerk shall consult with the municipality regarding dates, times and location for the hearing. Once the details are determined, the Clerk will convene a Panel in accordance with Part C: Clerks.
3. The Clerk is responsible for requesting and receiving pertinent information from the municipality in which the appeal originates which includes, but is not limited to:
 - a) the decision under appeal and notice of decision;
 - b) a listed of persons and agencies/departments notified of the application and decision;
 - c) the original application, diagrams, drawings and all other information which was submitted in support of the application which was used to render the decision;
 - d) any correspondence from government departments, utility companies, required referrals, affected or adjacent landowners;
 - e) relevant information from agenda packages and minutes of the meeting (approved or unapproved); and
 - f) any relevant plans, studies, or drawings that are considered by the municipality to be relevant to the matter.
4. The Clerk shall prepare and issue a notice of appeal with the location, date and time of the hearing.

Preliminary Matters:

1. Parties are encouraged to send written notice to the other parties to an appeal and to the Clerk of any preliminary matters such as:
 - a) requests for procedural directions,
 - b) notice of jurisdictional matters,
 - c) request for adjournments (with alternative dates).This should be done as soon as possible, so that the Panel can be made aware of preliminary matters that require attention prior to the hearing.

Adjournments

2. The Panel may adjourn (suspend) hearings to continue on a later date. This may be on the Panel's own initiative or in response to a request by a party.
3. Adjournments are discretionary. When considering whether to grant an adjournment request, the Panel may consider a number of factors, including the reason for the request and the impact an adjournment might have on any of the parties involved in the appeal.
4. If a party is requesting an adjournment, that request must be made at the earliest opportunity and reasons must be provided. If the request is made before the hearing begins, it must be in writing.
5. If a party is opposing an adjournment request, reasons must be provided.

Jurisdictional Issues

6. The Panel may consider whether it has the authority to hear an appeal ("jurisdictional issues"). Examples of jurisdictional issues include:
 - a) whether the appeal was started in time,

- b) whether the person who filed the appeal was entitled to do so,
 - c) whether the appeal was filed in time.
7. The Panel may dedicate a time at the beginning of the hearing to determine jurisdictional issues.
 8. The Panel may decide jurisdictional issues at any time during the appeal.

Evidence

1. There are rules of evidence which typically apply to court processes. The Panel is not bound by these rules of evidence. During the course of the proceedings, the Panel will determine what it considers as relevant evidence.
2. The Panel does not seek evidence nor advocate for any party to an appeal. The Panel relies on the evidence submitted by the parties. Each party is responsible for assembling and presenting evidence to support that party's case.
3. Despite the preceding clause, the Panel may request that parties submit relevant documents and materials respecting the appeal.

The Appeal Exhibit Package

1. All materials submitted to the Panel will be included in a document called the Exhibit Package.
2. Relevant hearing materials shall be included in the Exhibit package and will include:
 - a) the appeal letter,
 - b) the decision subject to the appeal,
 - c) the application,
 - d) the notice of appeal including a location diagram, and
 - e) other submissions as received.
3. The Exhibit Package will be forwarded by the Clerk to the applicant, appellant, members of the Panel, municipal officials, and a counter copy for the municipality prior to the hearing.
4. Additional submissions received after the distribution of the Exhibit Package will be made available to the parties noted in above section during the hearing.
5. Any submissions at the hearing should be made in a quantity as specified in the notice of appeal.

Requirements for Materials being Submitted

1. Materials filed with the Panel, whether in hard copy or electronic format, should be sequentially page numbered. Hard copy materials should be tabbed where appropriate. In the case of materials submitted electronically, sections of materials may be separated by a page containing a tab letter or number in large font where appropriate instead of tabs.
2. Documents that contain multiple parts, such as legal briefs and expert reports with appendices or schedules, should also be bound if they are being submitted in hard copy format in a quantity as specified in the notice of appeal.

3. All materials filed for the hearing should be clearly printed and legible. Parties are encouraged to highlight relevant passages or sections.
4. Applicants for development permits or subdivision approvals should provide legible copies of the plans on which the Development Authority or Subdivision Authority based its decision. The Panel may request that larger copies of plans be submitted for the purposes of legibility.
5. Some plans, maps or drawings are “to scale”, meaning that the size of an item on the page represents its actual size. If any plans, maps or drawings are to scale, hard copy printouts to this scale should be provided.
6. Parties are encouraged to submit their materials electronically. Electronic submissions must be in a printable format and in a format that is compatible with the Clerk’s computer systems.
7. The Exhibit Package is printed in black and white. Any materials which are in colour, such as coloured maps, plans, drawings, or photographs, should also be submitted as hard copies at the hearing.
8. At the discretion of the Clerk, large volume document submissions can be requested to be provided in printed form.

Submissions at the Hearing

1. Multiple copies of all materials provided at the hearing (including written presentations) are required. They are distributed to the Panel and other participants.
2. A minimum of 12 copies of materials provided at the hearing will be required.
3. The Panel may require additional copies of materials (beyond the 12 discussed above) to be provided, at the party’s expense.
4. All presentation materials, including written presentations, photographs, PowerPoint and other slide presentations, and any materials placed on the overhead projector or otherwise presented during the hearing, must be left with the Panel.
5. If a PowerPoint or other type of digital media presentation is made to the Panel, hard copies of the presentation must be provided at the hearing.

Participating in a Hearing

1. The usual order of presentation in a hearing when a development permit or subdivision decision is being appealed is:
 - a) Introduction by the Panel Chair,
 - b) Preliminary matters (if any),
 - c) Presentation by the Development Authority or Subdivision Authority,
 - d) Presentation by the appellant/applicant,
 - e) Presentation by the appellant,
 - f) Presentation by Government agencies,
 - g) Presentations from public gallery,
 - h) Rebuttal by the Development Authority or Subdivision Authority, and
 - i) Rebuttal by the appellant and other parties.

“Rebuttal” is the opportunity to respond to new issues which came up during the hearing and which could not have been reasonably anticipated. It is not an opportunity to raise new issues or repeat evidence and arguments that have already been made.

2. The usual order of presentation in a hearing when an enforcement order is being appealed is:
 - a) Introduction by the Panel Chair,
 - b) Preliminary matters (if any),
 - c) Presentation by the Development Authority,
 - d) Presentations in favour of the enforcement order (against the appeal),
 - e) Presentations in favour of the appeal (against the enforcement order),
 - f) Rebuttal by the Development Authority, and
 - g) Rebuttal by the appellant and other parties.
3. The Chair may decide to outline a different order of presentation if they believe there is a logical reason for doing so.
4. Panel members may ask questions of the parties at any time during the hearing.
5. Only those parties who made written or verbal submissions to the Panel before or during the hearing will be allowed to present a rebuttal.
6. There are limits on who is entitled to participate in a Panel hearing. Persons who want to participate in an appeal on the basis that they are affected by its outcome must be prepared to explain why they are affected, including providing their addresses and land locations.
7. Appeals to the Panel are hearings *de novo*. This means that the Panel can consider new evidence and arguments the Development Authority or Subdivision Authority did not consider in reaching its decision.
8. Parties are encouraged to be prepared to speak to all aspects of the proposed development or subdivision or other matter before the Panel, not just those aspects identified in the notice of appeal.
9. The Panel’s hearings are public and conducted in person in the municipality in which the appeal originates.
10. The Panel’s hearings are conducted in English. The Panel does not provide interpreters. Parties may provide their own interpreters at their own expense.
11. If a person fails to attend a scheduled hearing, the Panel may decide the appeal in that person’s absence.
12. Any concerns about the Panel’s hearing processes should be drawn to the Panel’s attention as soon as possible.
13. Only one person should speak at a time during the Panel’s hearing. The Chair will provide directions about the order of the speakers or presenters.
13. The Panel may give other directions to parties presenting during the hearing to facilitate the hearing process. These directions may include advising parties that their submissions or arguments are outside of the scope of the things the Panel can consider in the appeal.

The Public Nature of the Hearing

1. The Panel's hearings are open to the public, but are not a forum for public debate.
2. The Panel's hearings are summarized in a record of proceedings and are not recorded or transcribed.
3. No one is permitted to record, videotape, photograph or otherwise record the Panel's hearings or the Panel's hearing room without the prior permission of the Chair.
4. At the end of the parties' submissions, and at any time during the hearing, the Panel may meet privately to discuss the appeal. The Panel's discussions or deliberations regarding the outcome of the appeal are done during a private meeting.
5. The Panel may call the appeal parties back at any time before it issues its written decision, within the prescribed 15 days, to seek clarification from the parties. This will be done with notice to all of the parties in the hearing.
6. All documents, submissions, and other materials submitted to the Panel by the parties, as well as the Panel's decision, will be available to the public.

Conduct During the Hearing

1. All persons participating in the Panel's processes are required to conduct themselves with courtesy and respect. Disruptive, disrespectful or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated.
2. The Chair may direct that a person be removed from the hearing if they display disruptive, disrespectful or threatening behaviour.
3. If the person(s) refuse to leave, the Chair may call a recess and call for the proper authorities to remove the person(s) from the hearing venue.

PART E: AFTER THE HEARING

Decisions of the Panel

1. The Panel may consider its previous decisions, but it is not bound by them. Each appeal is decided based on its own merits and on the evidence, arguments, and circumstances of the case.
2. The Panel's role is to review decisions of the Development Authority or Subdivision Authority by way of a hearing *de novo*. It may uphold these decisions, reverse these decisions, or change these decisions in part.
3. The Panel's decision will be issued as soon as possible after the hearing is over, but within the required 15 days as per the *Municipal Government Act*.
4. The Panel's decision is final when it is in writing, signed, and issued. Once this has happened, the Panel has no more authority over the subject matter of the appeal.
5. The Panel does not have the jurisdiction or authority to award pecuniary or monetary awards or costs to any person, entity or organization involved in an appeal.

Retention of Evidence

1. The Clerk retains all documents and electronic submissions for a particular hearing and a complete copy is provided to the municipality, and coordinator.
2. The Panel retains physical evidence such as samples and models for at least 60 days after the decision is issued, or longer if the Panel's decision is appealed. These materials will not be returned unless a request is made at the time they are submitted.

Distribution of Panel Decisions

1. The Clerk shall send copies of Panel's decisions by mail to the appellant, the applicant, the Development Authority or Subdivision Authority, parties originally notified of the hearing and participants in the hearing who have requested a copy of the decision.

Appeal of Panel Decisions

1. The Panel's decisions may be appealed to the Alberta Court of Appeal on a question of law or jurisdiction in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*.
2. Upon request, the Clerk will according to FOIPP provide an electronic copy of the exhibit package and decision to the interested party.

PRMS would like to acknowledge Oldman River Regional Services Commission for their contribution of their documents for use in completing this document for Palliser ISDAB

