

We offer here recommendations for using Zoom and other video conferencing tools for meetings. These guidelines are provided for Town board and committee members and for members of the public when participating in a Town meeting. People may also find these guidelines helpful for any meeting conducted by video conferencing. We put this list together based on suggestions from Planning Board chair Paul Rasmussen, articles from UNH Cooperative Extension, and an article by Lindsay Crafford in GoToMeeting.

We understand that many residents are already well aware of these recommended approaches. Thank you for your consideration.

**Pick a good location.** Set up in a room where you can close the door and have quiet and privacy without interruptions. A simple orderly background is best so that other participants focus on you rather than a messy bookshelf, an unmade bed, colorful artwork, or an open door to the bathroom (bad feng shui!). Find a spot with clear even lighting or side lighting. Do not sit in front of a window or light source which would put you in shadow and cause glare.

We appreciate that you might prefer to be in Hawaii or Paris but recommend not uploading an artificial background unless you have a greenscreen and the background will be static and not divert viewers' attention.

**Eliminate distractions.** Please be mindful of potential distractions such as children, pets, and the telephone ringing. You may not notice the background noise but it can be distracting to others.

**Dress appropriately.** It may be a pleasant relief to participate in a meeting from the comfort of home but please don't dress like a zclub. Remember you are still visible to the other board members and the public.

**Set up early.** Settle in at least ten minutes before the meeting begins to make sure that you have the link to the Zoom meeting, your equipment is set up properly, and you are ready to go when the roll call commences.

**Sign in.** The Town now requires registration for Zoom meetings. Please make the adjustment so that your full name is shown on the screen. Otherwise people may not recognize you especially if your video turns off for some reason.

**Video.** If you have the capacity to participate by video is far preferable to using audio only. Some Town meetings still allow for limited physical attendance so if you do not have video available you might consider coming to the meeting (while observing all necessary safety requirements, of course). For project applications it is especially important that the board members are able to see the presenter.

**Set your camera properly.** Remember that everybody else sees you from the camera view. Place your camera on a steady surface at eye level or higher if possible. You can use books

to raise your computer up. This placement will enhance your appearance and provide a more professional presentation. When you are speaking it is helpful to look at the camera rather than the screen if you can.

**Mute your microphone.** Please be sure to turn off your microphone (A red slash line will go through the icon) as soon as you enter the video conference after you have greeted other board members. Leaving one's microphone on can be highly distracting and sometimes embarrassing. You should be able to hold down the space bar when you wish to speak to avoid having to keep clicking on your microphone icon. Please check your mute periodically to ensure you haven't left it on after speaking.

**Speak at a good volume.** Too frequently others cannot hear because a person speaks too softly or is sitting too far away. On the other hand, please be careful not to shout. Please sit as close to the microphone as is comfortable. The first time that you speak you might ask if people can hear you all right. DCAT cannot adjust the volume of a speaker on Zoom.

**Stay focused on the meeting.** It may be tempting to check your inbox or multitask during the meeting but please stay focused on the proceedings as best you can. Items of interest can pop up when you are not expecting them plus it can be evident to others if you are engaged with some other activity. Our adult children in Boston or Seattle may insist on having dinner while speaking to us but please don't eat during meetings. You knew that.

Use your judgment whether or not to inform the chairperson if you need to step away for a few minutes or you might inform another member via the chat function. Of course, if you are uncomfortable sitting for the duration of the meeting feel free to do whatever you need to do. You may want to turn off the video icon when doing your downward dog.

**Consider the accessories.** Play around with different settings on zoom to find one that is useful, such as speaker versus gallery view.

You may want to look into using a wireless headset or headphones which would allow you to move around some.

**Follow norms of the board.** Each board or committee may set its own procedures. For example, the norm for starting to speak could involve simply jumping in when there is an opening, raising the hand feature, or using the chat box.

Again, thank you for your consideration in reviewing these recommended procedures.