

ZONING HEARING BOARD APPLICATION

Check List of Submittal Requirements:

- ☐ Filing fee (see Fee Schedule for amount)
- ☐ Escrow (see Fee Schedule for amount)

Zoning Hearing Board escrow covers advertising, meeting room use at \$70.00 for each day of meeting room use, 10% of the application fee for administrative expenses incurred by Upper Makefield Township, and 50% of the court stenographer appearance fee. Any funds remaining from the Zoning Hearing Board escrow, after payment of the above costs, will be refunded to the Applicant. The Applicant will receive an invoice for fees due should costs exceed the Zoning Hearing Board escrow.

☐ Application Packet:

- ☐ Properly completed Zoning Hearing Board application, signed by the owner and contract purchaser (as applicable) and notarized. The signature of an attorney or agent is unacceptable.
- ☐ Survey/site plan or plot plan (as applicable) - folded to a maximum of 8" x 13"
- ☐ Architectural plans (recommended) - folded to a maximum of 8" x 13"
- ☐ Supporting documents
- ☐ Photographs of the subject property and/or areas of proposed changes
- ☐ Deed of property

How to submit:

- ☐ Eight (8) complete hard copy application packets including the original notarized application
- ☐ Digital PDF version of application and all supporting documents combined in one complete packet (on USB or emailed to: codeoffice@uppermakefield.org)

Meeting Requirements:

- ☐ Owner / Principal of Owning Entity must be present at all Zoning Hearing Board hearings; otherwise, the petition will be dismissed unless postponed by the Zoning Hearing Board, upon cause shown.

Date Application Delivered to Township: _____

Date Application Deemed Complete by the Township: _____

1. Appellant/Applicant Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____
- Owner Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____
- Attorney/Agent Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____
2. If applicant is not the owner, state applicant's authority to title interest to bring this application (equitable owner, agent, lessee, etc.) and provide the owner's written consent _____

3. Has there been any previous zoning appeal, variance or special exception for this property?
Yes _____ No _____
If yes, please indicate the date thereof and nature of zoning granted:

4. The undersigned hereby: (check applicable item or items)
- (a) _____ appeals from the action of the Code Enforcement Officer
 - (b) _____ requests a special exception
 - (c) _____ requests a variance
 - (d) _____ challenges the validity of the zoning ordinance or map

5. Address of premises _____
Tax Map Parcel No. 47-_____ Date of Present Deed _____
Present Zoning Classification _____
Present Use _____ Lot Size _____
Nature of Improvements:
(a) Present _____
(b) Proposed _____

6. Use in case of an **APPEAL** from the action of the code enforcement officer (MPC 916.2):
(a) The action taken was _____

(b) The date of the action was _____
(c) The foregoing action was in error because _____

7. Use for request for **SPECIAL EXCEPTION** (MPC 912.1):
(a) Nature of special exception sought is _____

(b) The special exception is allowed under Article _____ Section _____
Subsection _____ of the Newtown Area Joint Municipal Zoning Ordinance.
(c) If more than one (1) special exception is requested, list all ordinance references and the nature
of the exceptions sought: _____

8. Use for request for **VARIANCE** (MPC 910.2):

- (a) The nature of variance sought is _____

- (b) The variance is from Article _____ Section _____
Subsection _____ of the Newtown Area Joint Municipal Zoning Ordinance.
- (c) If more than one (1) variance is requested, list all ordinance references and the nature of the
variances sought _____

- (d) The nature of the unique circumstances and the unnecessary hardship justifying this request for
a variance is [MPC.Article IX.Section 910.2.(a)] _____

9. Use in case of a **CHALLENGE TO THE VALIDITY** of a zoning ordinance or map (MPC 916.1):

- (a) The ordinance or map challenged is as follows _____

- (b) The challenge is ripe for decision because _____

- (c) The ordinance challenged is invalid because _____

It is acknowledged and agreed by the owner and applicant that the Township, its employees, officials representatives, consultants and/or agents **may enter the property** at any reasonable hour with prior notification to the Applicant, Owner or Inhabitants for purposes of inspection, verification, review or data acquisition as part of the hearing process of the submitted application(s).

OWNER SIGNATURE (REQUIRED)

PRINTED NAME

APPLICANT SIGNATURE

PRINTED NAME

STATE OR COMMONWEALTH OF _____

COUNTY OF _____

The undersigned, being duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he/she is the above named applicant, that he/she is authorized to and does take this affidavit on behalf of the owner, and that the facts are true and correct.

Applicant

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED

before me this _____ day of
_____, 20____.

Notary Public

DATE RECEIVED _____

FEE PAID \$ _____

DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & ZONING

Article IX - Zoning Hearing Board and other Administrative Proceedings

Section 901. General Provisions. Every municipality which has enacted or enacts a zoning ordinance pursuant to this act or prior enabling laws, shall create a zoning hearing board. As used in this article, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the term “board” shall refer to such zoning hearing board.

Section 902. Existing Boards of Adjustment. (902 repealed Dec. 21, 1988, P.L.1329, No.170)

Section 903. Membership of Board.

(a) The membership of the board shall, upon the determination of the governing body, consist of either three or five residents of the municipality appointed by resolution by the governing body. The terms of office of a three member board shall be three years and shall be so fixed that the term of office of one member shall expire each year. The terms of office of a five member board shall be five years and shall be so fixed that the term of office of one member of a five member board shall expire each year. If a three member board is changed to a five member board, the members of the existing three member board shall continue in office until their term of office would expire under prior law. The governing body shall appoint two additional members to the board with terms scheduled to expire in accordance with the provisions of this section. The board shall promptly notify the governing body of any vacancies which occur. Appointments to fill vacancies shall be only for the unexpired portion of the term. Members of the board shall hold no other elected or appointed office in the municipality nor shall any member be an employee of the municipality.

(b) The governing body may appoint by resolution at least one but no more than three residents of the municipality to serve as alternate members of the board. The term of office of an alternate member shall be three years. When seated pursuant to the provisions of section 906, an alternate shall be entitled to participate in all proceedings and discussions of the board to the same and full extent as provided by law for board members, including specifically the right to cast a vote as a voting member during the proceedings, and shall have all the powers and duties set forth in this act and as otherwise provided by law. Alternates shall hold no other elected or appointed office in the municipality, including service as a member of the planning commission or as a zoning officer, nor shall any alternate be an employee of the municipality. Any alternate may participate in any proceeding or discussion of the board but shall not be entitled to vote as a member of the board nor be compensated pursuant to section 907 unless designated as a voting alternate member pursuant to section 906.

Section 904. Joint Zoning Hearing Boards.

(a) Two or more municipalities may, by ordinances enacted in each, create a joint zoning hearing board in lieu of a separate board for each municipality. A joint board shall consist of two members appointed from among the residents of each municipality by its governing body.

(b) The term of office of members of joint boards shall be five years, except that of the two members first appointed from each municipality, the term of office of one member shall be three years. When any vacancies occur, the joint board shall promptly notify the governing body which appointed the member whose office has become vacant, and such governing body shall appoint a member for the unexpired portion of the term. Members of the joint board shall hold no other office in the participating municipality.

(c) Where legal counsel is desired, an attorney, other than the solicitors of the participating municipalities, may be appointed to serve as counsel to the joint zoning hearing board.

(d) In all other respects, including the appointment and seating of alternate members, joint zoning hearing boards shall be governed by provisions of this act not inconsistent with the provisions of this section.

Section 905. Removal of Members. Any board member may be removed for malfeasance, misfeasance or nonfeasance in office or for other just cause by a majority vote of the governing body which appointed the member, taken after the member has received 15 days' advance notice of the intent to take such a vote. A hearing shall be held in connection with the vote if the member shall request it in writing.

Section 906. Organization of Board.

(a) The board shall elect from its own membership its officers, who shall serve annual terms as such and may succeed themselves. For the conduct of any hearing and the taking of any action, a quorum shall be not less than a majority of all the members of the board, but the board may appoint a hearing officer from its own membership to conduct any hearing on its behalf and the parties may waive further action by the board as provided in section 908.

(b) The chairman of the board may designate alternate members of the board to replace any absent or disqualified member and if, by reason of absence or disqualification of a member, a quorum is not reached, the chairman of the board shall designate as many alternate members of the board to sit on the board as may be needed to reach a quorum. Any alternate member of the board shall continue to serve on the board in all proceedings involving the matter or case for which the alternate was initially appointed until the board has made a final decision on the matter or case. Designation of an alternate pursuant to this section shall be made on a case by case basis in rotation according to declining seniority among all alternates.

(c) The board may make, alter and rescind rules and forms for its procedure, consistent with ordinances of the municipality and laws of the Commonwealth. The board shall keep full public records of its business, which records shall be the property of the municipality, and shall submit a report of its activities to the governing body as requested by the governing body.

Section 907. Expenditures for Services. Within the limits of funds appropriated by the governing body, the board may employ or contract for secretaries, clerks, legal counsel, consultants and other technical and clerical services. Members of the board may receive compensation for the performance of their duties, as may be fixed by the governing body, but in no case shall it exceed the rate of compensation authorized to be paid to the members of the governing body. Alternate members of the board may receive compensation, as may be fixed by the governing body, for the performance of their duties when designated as alternate members pursuant to section 906, but in no case shall such compensation exceed the rate of compensation authorized to be paid to the members of the governing body.

Section 908. Hearings. The board shall conduct hearings and make decisions in accordance with the following requirements:

- (1) Public notice shall be given and written notice shall be given to the applicant, the zoning officer, such other persons as the governing body shall designate by ordinance and to any person who has made timely request for the same. Written notices shall be given at such time and in such manner as shall be prescribed by ordinance or, in the absence of ordinance provision, by rules of the board. In addition to the written notice provided herein, written notice of said hearing shall be conspicuously posted on the affected tract of land at least one week prior to the hearing.
- (1.1) The governing body may prescribe reasonable fees with respect to hearings before the zoning hearing board. Fees for said hearings may include compensation for the secretary and members of the zoning hearing board, notice and advertising costs and necessary administrative overhead connected with the hearing. The costs, however, shall not include legal expenses of the zoning hearing board, expenses for engineering, architectural or other technical consultants or expert witness costs.

- (1.2) The first hearing before the board or hearing officer shall be commenced within 60 days from the date of receipt of the applicant's application, unless the applicant has agreed in writing to an extension of time. Each subsequent hearing before the board or hearing officer shall be held within 45 days of the prior hearing, unless otherwise agreed to by the applicant in writing or on the record. An applicant shall complete the presentation of his case-in-chief within 100 days of the first hearing. Upon the request of the applicant, the board or hearing officer shall assure that the applicant receives at least seven hours of hearings within the 100 days, including the first hearing. Persons opposed to the application shall complete the presentation of their opposition to the application within 100 days of the first hearing held after the completion of the applicant's case-in-chief. And applicant may, upon request, be granted additional hearings to complete his case-in-chief provided the persons opposed to the application are granted an equal number of additional hearings. Persons opposed to the application may, upon the written consent or consent on the record by the applicant and municipality, be granted additional hearings to complete their opposition to the application provided the applicant is granted an equal number of additional hearings for rebuttal.
- (2) The hearings shall be conducted by the board or the board may appoint any member or an independent attorney as a hearing officer. The decision, or, where no decision is called for, the findings shall be made by the board; however, the appellant or the applicant, as the case may be, in addition to the municipality, may, prior to the decision of the hearing, waive decision or findings by the board and accept the decision or findings of the hearing officer as final.
- (3) The parties to the hearing shall be the municipality, any person affected by the application who has made timely appearance of record before the board, and any other person including civic or community organizations permitted to appear by the board. The board shall have power to require that all persons who wish to be considered parties enter appearances in writing on forms provided by the board for that purpose.
- (4) The chairman or acting chairman of the board or the hearing officer presiding shall have power to administer oaths and issue subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of relevant documents and papers, including witnesses and documents requested by the parties.
- (5) The parties shall have the right to be represented by counsel and shall be afforded the opportunity to respond and present evidence and argument and cross-examine adverse witnesses on all relevant issues.
- (6) Formal rules of evidence shall not apply, but irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious evidence may be excluded.
- (7) The board or the hearing officer, as the case may be, shall keep a stenographic record of the proceedings. The appearance fee for a stenographer shall be shared equally by the applicant and the board. The cost of the original transcript shall be paid by the board if the transcript is ordered by the board or hearing officer or shall be paid by the person appealing from the decision of the board if such appeal is made, and in either event the cost of additional copies shall be paid by the person requesting such copy or copies. In other cases the party requesting the original transcript shall bear the cost thereof.
- (8) The board or the hearing officer shall not communicate, directly or indirectly, with any party or his representatives in connection with any issue involved except upon notice and opportunity for all parties to participate, shall not take notice of any communication, reports, staff memoranda, or other materials, except advice from their solicitor, unless the parties are afforded an opportunity to contest the material so noticed and shall not inspect the site or its surroundings after the commencement of hearings with any party or his representative unless all parties are given an opportunity to be present.
- (9) The board or the hearing officer, as the case may be, shall render a written decision or, when no decision is called for, make written findings on the application within 45 days after the last hearing before the board or hearing officer. Where the application is contested or denied, each decision shall be

accompanied by findings of fact and conclusions based thereon together with the reasons therefor. Conclusions based on any provisions of this act or of any ordinance, rule or regulation shall contain a reference to the provision relied on and the reasons why the conclusion is deemed appropriate in the light of the facts found. If the hearing is conducted by a hearing officer and there has been no stipulation that his decision or findings are final, the board shall make his report and recommendations available to the parties within 45 days and the parties shall be entitled to make written representations thereon to the board prior to final decision or entry of findings, and the board's decision shall be entered no later than 30 days after the report of the hearing officer. Except for challenges filed under section 916.1 where the board fails to render the decision within the period required by this subsection or fails to commence, conduct or complete the required hearing as provided in subsection (1.2), the decision shall be deemed to have been rendered in favor of the applicant unless the applicant has agreed in writing or on the record to an extension of time. When a decision has been rendered in favor of the applicant because of the failure of the board to meet or render a decision as hereinabove provided, the board shall give public notice of said decision within ten days from the last day it could have met to render a decision in the same manner as provided in subsection (1) of this section. If the board shall fail to provide such notice, the applicant may do so. Nothing in this subsection shall prejudice the right of any party opposing the application to appeal the decision to a court of competent jurisdiction.

- (10) A copy of the final decision or, where no decision is called for, of the findings shall be delivered to the applicant personally or mailed to him not later than the day following its date. To all other persons who have filed their name and address with the board not later than the last day of the hearing, the board shall provide by mail or otherwise, brief notice of the decision or findings and a statement of the place at which the full decision or findings may be examined.

Section 908.1. Mediation Option.

- (a) Parties to proceedings authorized in this article and Article X-A may utilize mediation as an aid in completing such proceedings. In proceedings before the zoning hearing board, in no case shall the zoning hearing board initiate mediation or participate as a mediating party. Mediation shall supplement, not replace, those procedures in this article and Article X-A once they have been formally initiated. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted as expanding or limiting municipal police powers or as modifying any principles of substantive law.
- (b) Participation in mediation shall be wholly voluntary. The appropriateness of mediation shall be determined by the particulars of each case and the willingness of the parties to negotiate. Any municipality offering the mediation option shall assure that, in each case, the mediating parties, assisted by the mediator as appropriate, develop terms and conditions for:
 - (1) Funding mediation.
 - (2) Selecting a mediator who, at a minimum, shall have a working knowledge of municipal zoning and subdivision procedures and demonstrated skills in mediation.
 - (3) Completing mediation, including time limits for such completion.
 - (4) Suspending time limits otherwise authorized in this act, provided there is written consent by the mediating parties, and by an applicant or municipal decision making body if either is not a party to the mediation.
 - (5) Identifying all parties and affording them the opportunity to participate.
 - (6) Subject to legal restraints, determining whether some or all of the mediation sessions shall be open or closed to the public.
 - (7) Assuring that mediated solutions are in writing and signed by the parties, and become subject to review and approval by the appropriate decision making body pursuant to the authorized procedures set forth in the other sections of this act.

(c) No offers or statements made in the mediation sessions, excluding the final written mediated agreement, shall be admissible as evidence in any subsequent judicial or administrative proceedings.

Section 909. Board's Functions: Appeals from the Zoning Officer. (909 repealed Dec. 21, 1988, P.L.1329, No.170)

Section 909.1. Jurisdiction.

(a) The zoning hearing board shall have exclusive jurisdiction to hear and render final adjudications in the following matters:

- (1) Substantive challenges to the validity of any land use ordinance, except those brought before the governing body pursuant to sections 609.1 and 916.1(a)(2).
- (2) Deleted by 2008, July 4, P.L. 319, No. 39, §3, imd. effective.
- (3) Appeals from the determination of the zoning officer, including, but not limited to, the granting or denial of any permit, or failure to act on the application therefor, the issuance of any cease and desist order or the registration or refusal to register any nonconforming use, structure or lot.
- (4) Appeals from a determination by a municipal engineer or the zoning officer with reference to the administration of any flood plain or flood hazard ordinance or such provisions within a land use ordinance.
- (5) Applications for variances from the terms of the zoning ordinance and flood hazard ordinance or such provisions within a land use ordinance, pursuant to section 910.2.
- (6) Applications for special exceptions under the zoning ordinance or flood plain or flood hazard ordinance or such provisions within a land use ordinance, pursuant to section 912.1.
- (7) Appeals from the determination of any officer or agency charged with the administration of any transfers of development rights or performance density provisions of the zoning ordinance.
- (8) Appeals from the zoning officer's determination under section 916.2.
- (9) Appeals from the determination of the zoning officer or municipal engineer in the administration of any land use ordinance or provision thereof with reference to sedimentation and erosion control and storm water management insofar as the same relate to development not involving Article V or VII applications.

(b) The governing body or, except as to clauses (3), (4) and (5), the planning agency, if designated, shall have exclusive jurisdiction to hear and render final adjudications in the following matters:

- (1) All applications for approvals of planned residential developments under Article VII pursuant to the provisions of section 702.
- (2) All applications pursuant to section 508 for approval of subdivisions or land developments under Article V. Any provision in a subdivision and land development ordinance requiring that final action concerning subdivision and land development applications be taken by a planning agency rather than the governing body shall vest exclusive jurisdiction in the planning agency in lieu of the governing body for purposes of the provisions of this paragraph.
- (3) Applications for conditional use under the express provisions of the zoning ordinance pursuant to section 603(c)(2).
- (4) Applications for curative amendment to a zoning ordinance pursuant to sections 609.1 and 916.1(a)(2).
- (5) All petitions for amendments to land use ordinances, pursuant to the procedures set forth in section 609. Any action on such petitions shall be deemed legislative acts, provided that nothing contained in this clause shall be deemed to enlarge or diminish existing law with reference to appeals to court.

- (6) Appeals from the determination of the zoning officer or the municipal engineer in the administration of any land use ordinance or provisions thereof with reference to sedimentation and erosion control and storm water management insofar as the same relate to application for land development under Articles V and VII. Where such determination relates only to development not involving an Article V or VII application, the appeal from such determination of the zoning officer or the municipal engineer shall be to the zoning hearing board pursuant to subsection (a)(9). Where the applicable land use ordinance vests jurisdiction for final administration of subdivision and land development applications in the planning agency, all appeals from determinations under this paragraph shall be to the planning agency and all appeals from the decision of the planning agency shall be to court.
- (7) Applications for a special encroachment permit pursuant to section 405 and applications for a permit pursuant to section 406.

Section 910. Board Functions: Challenge to the Validity of any Ordinance or Map. (910 repealed Dec. 21, 1988, P.L.1329, No.170)

Section 910.1. Applicability of Judicial Remedies. Nothing contained in this article shall be construed to deny the appellant the right to proceed directly to court where appropriate, pursuant to the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure No. 1091 (relating to action in mandamus).

Section 910.2. Zoning Hearing Board's Functions; Variances.

(a) The board shall hear requests for variances where it is alleged that the provisions of the zoning ordinance inflict unnecessary hardship upon the applicant. The board may by rule prescribe the form of application and may require preliminary application to the zoning officer. The board may grant a variance, provided that all of the following findings are made where relevant in a given case:

- (1) That there are unique physical circumstances or conditions, including irregularity, narrowness, or shallowness of lot size or shape, or exceptional topographical or other physical conditions peculiar to the particular property and that the unnecessary hardship is due to such conditions and not the circumstances or conditions generally created by the provisions of the zoning ordinance in the neighborhood or district in which the property is located.
- (2) That because of such physical circumstances or conditions, there is no possibility that the property can be developed in strict conformity with the provisions of the zoning ordinance and that the authorization of a variance is therefore necessary to enable the reasonable use of the property.
- (3) That such unnecessary hardship has not been created by the appellant.
- (4) That the variance, if authorized, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood or district in which the property is located, nor substantially or permanently impair the appropriate use or development of adjacent property, nor be detrimental to the public welfare.
- (5) That the variance, if authorized, will represent the minimum variance that will afford relief and will represent the least modification possible of the regulation in issue.

(b) In granting any variance, the board may attach such reasonable conditions and safeguards as it may deem necessary to implement the purposes of this act and the zoning ordinance.

Section 912. Board's Functions: Variances. (912 repealed Dec. 21, 1988, P.L.1329, No.170)

Section 912.1. Zoning Hearing Board's Functions; Special Exception. Where the governing body, in the zoning ordinance, has stated special exceptions to be granted or denied by the board pursuant to express standards and criteria, the board shall hear and decide requests for such special exceptions in accordance with

such standards and criteria. In granting a special exception, the board may attach such reasonable conditions and safeguards, in addition to those expressed in the ordinance, as it may deem necessary to implement the purposes of this act and the zoning ordinance.

Section 913. Board's Functions: Special Exceptions. (913 repealed Dec. 21, 1988, P.L.1329, No.170)

Section 913.1. Unified Appeals. (913.1 repealed Dec. 21, 1988, P.L.1329, No.170)

Section 913.2. Governing Body's Functions; Conditional Uses.

(a) Where the governing body, in the zoning ordinances, has stated conditional uses to be granted or denied by the governing body pursuant to express standards and criteria, the governing body shall hold hearings on and decide requests for such conditional uses in accordance with such standards and criteria. The hearing shall be conducted by the board or the board may appoint any member or an independent attorney as a hearing officer. The decision, or, where no decision is called for, the findings shall be made by the board. However, the appellant or the applicant, as the case may be, in addition to the municipality, may, prior to the decision of the hearing, waive decision or findings by the board and accept the decision or findings of the hearing officer as final. In granting a conditional use, the governing body may attach such reasonable conditions and safeguards, in addition to those expressed in the ordinance, as it may deem necessary to implement the purposes of this act in the zoning ordinance.

(b) (1) The governing body shall render a written decision or, when no decision is called for, make written findings on the conditional use application within 45 days after the last hearing before the governing body. Where the application is contested or denied, each decision shall be accompanied by findings of fact or conclusions based thereon, together with any reasons therefor. Conclusions based on any provisions of this act or of any ordinance, rule or regulation shall contain a reference to the provision relied on and the reasons why the conclusion is deemed appropriate in the light of the facts found.

- (2) Where the governing body fails to render the decision within the period required by this subsection or fails to commence, conduct or complete the required hearing as provided in section 908 (1.2), the decision shall be deemed to have been rendered in favor of the applicant unless the applicant has agreed in writing or on the record to an extension of time. When a decision has been rendered in favor of the applicant because of the failure of the governing body to meet or render a decision as hereinabove provided, the governing body shall give public notice of the decision within ten days from the last day it could have met to render a decision in the same manner as required by the public notice requirements of this act. If the governing body shall fail to provide such notice, the applicant may do so.
- (3) Nothing in this subsection shall prejudice the right of any party opposing the application to appeal the decision to a court of competent jurisdiction. A copy of the final decision or, where no decision is called for, of the findings shall be delivered to the applicant personally or mailed to him no later than the day following its date.

Section 913.3. Parties Appellant Before the Board. Appeals under section 909.1(a)(1), (2), (3), (4), (7), (8) and (9) may be filed with the board in writing by the landowner affected, any officer or agency of the municipality, or any person aggrieved. Requests for a variance under section 910.2 and for special exception under section 912.1 may be filed with the board by any landowner or any tenant with the permission of such landowner.

Section 914. Parties Appellant Before Board. (914 repealed Dec. 21, 1988, P.L.1329, No.170)

Section 914.1. Time Limitations.

(a) No person shall be allowed to file any proceeding with the board later than 30 days after an application for development, preliminary or final, has been approved by an appropriate municipal officer, agency or body if such proceeding is designed to secure reversal or to limit the approval in any manner unless such person alleges and proves that he had no notice, knowledge, or reason to believe that such approval had been given. If such person has succeeded to his interest after such approval, he shall be bound by the knowledge of his predecessor in interest. The failure of anyone other than the landowner to appeal from an adverse decision on a tentative plan pursuant to section 709 or from an adverse decision by a zoning officer on a challenge to the validity of an ordinance or map pursuant to section 916.2 shall preclude an appeal from a final approval except in the case where the final submission substantially deviates from the approved tentative approval.

(b) All appeals from determinations adverse to the landowners shall be filed by the landowner within 30 days after notice of the determination is issued.

Section 915. Time Limitations; Persons Aggrieved. (915 repealed Dec. 21, 1988, P.L.1329, No.170)

Section 915.1. Stay of Proceedings.

(a) Upon filing of any proceeding referred to in section 913.3 and during its pendency before the board, all land development pursuant to any challenged ordinance, order or approval of the zoning officer or of any agency or body, and all official action thereunder, shall be stayed unless the zoning officer or any other appropriate agency or body certifies to the board facts indicating that such stay would cause imminent peril to life or property, in which case the development or official action shall not be stayed otherwise than by a restraining order, which may be granted by the board or by the court having jurisdiction of zoning appeals, on petition, after notice to the zoning officer or other appropriate agency or body. When an application for development, preliminary or final, has been duly approved and proceedings designed to reverse or limit the approval are filed with the board by persons other than the applicant, the applicant may petition the court having jurisdiction of zoning appeals to order such persons to post bond as a condition to continuing the proceedings before the board.

(b) After the petition is presented, the court shall hold a hearing to determine if the filing of the appeal is frivolous. At the hearing, evidence may be presented on the merits of the case. It shall be the burden of the applicant for a bond to prove the appeal is frivolous. After consideration of all evidence presented, if the court determines that the appeal is frivolous, it shall grant the petition for a bond. The right to petition the court to order the appellants to post bond may be waived by the appellee, but such waiver may be revoked by him if an appeal is taken from a final decision of the court.

(c) The question whether or not such petition should be granted and the amount of the bond shall be within the sound discretion of the court. An order denying a petition for bond shall be interlocutory. An order directing the responding party to post a bond shall be interlocutory.

(d) If an appeal is taken by a respondent to the petition for a bond from an order of the court dismissing a zoning appeal for refusal to post a bond and the appellate court sustains the order of the court below to post a bond, the respondent to the petition for a bond, upon motion of the petitioner and after hearing in the court having jurisdiction of zoning appeals, shall be liable for all reasonable costs, expenses and attorney fees incurred by the petitioner.

Section 916. Stay of Proceedings. (916 repealed Dec. 21, 1988, P.L.1329, No.170)

Section 916.1. Validity of Ordinance; Substantive Questions.

(a) A landowner who, on substantive grounds, desires to challenge the validity of an ordinance or map or any provision thereof which prohibits or restricts the use or development of land in which he has an interest shall submit the challenge either:

- (1) to the zoning hearing board under section 909.1(a); or
- (2) to the governing body under section 909.1(b)(4), together with a request for a curative amendment under section 609.1.

(b) Persons aggrieved by a use or development permitted on the land of another by an ordinance or map, or any provision thereof, who desires to challenge its validity on substantive grounds shall first submit their challenge to the zoning hearing board for a decision thereon under section 909.1(a)(1).

(c) The submissions referred to in subsections (a) and (b) shall be governed by the following:

- (1) In challenges before the zoning hearing board, the challenging party shall make a written request to the board that it hold a hearing on its challenge. The request shall contain the reasons for the challenge. Where the landowner desires to challenge the validity of such ordinance and elects to proceed by curative amendment under section 609.1, his application to the governing body shall contain, in addition to the requirements of the written request hereof, the plans and explanatory materials describing the use or development proposed by the landowner in lieu of the use or development permitted by the challenged ordinance or map. Such plans or other materials shall not be required to meet the standards prescribed for preliminary, tentative or final approval or for the issuance of a permit, so long as they provide reasonable notice of the proposed use or development and a sufficient basis for evaluating the challenged ordinance or map in light thereof. Nothing herein contained shall preclude the landowner from first seeking a final approval before submitting his challenge.
- (2) If the submission is made by the landowner to the governing body under subsection (a)(2), the request also shall be accompanied by an amendment or amendments to the ordinance proposed by the landowner to cure the alleged defects therein.
- (3) If the submission is made to the governing body, the municipal solicitor shall represent and advise it at the hearing or hearings referred to in section 909.1(b)(4).
- (4) The governing body may retain an independent attorney to present the defense of the challenged ordinance or map on its behalf and to present their witnesses on its behalf.
- (5) Based upon the testimony presented at the hearing or hearings, the governing body or the zoning board, as the case may be, shall determine whether the challenged ordinance or map is defective, as alleged by the landowner. If a challenge heard by a governing body is found to have merit, the governing body shall proceed as provide in section 609.1. If a challenge heard by a zoning hearing board is found to have merit, the decision of the zoning hearing board shall include recommended amendments to the challenged ordinance which will cure the defects found. In reaching its decision, the zoning hearing board shall consider the amendments, plans and explanatory material submitted by the landowner and shall also consider:
 - (i) the impact of the proposal upon roads, sewer facilities, water supplies, schools and other public service facilities;
 - (ii) if the proposal is for a residential use, the impact of the proposal upon regional housing needs and the effectiveness of the proposal in providing housing units of a type actually available to and affordable by classes of persons otherwise unlawfully excluded by the challenged provisions of the ordinance or map;

- (iii) the suitability of the site for the intensity of use proposed by the site's soils, slopes, woodlands, wetlands, flood plains, aquifers, natural resources and other natural features;
 - (iv) the impact of the proposed use on the site's soils, slopes, woodlands, wetlands, flood plains, natural resources and natural features, the degree to which these are protected or destroyed, the tolerance of the resources to development and any adverse environmental impacts; and
 - (v) the impact of the proposal on the preservation of agriculture and other land uses which are essential to public health and welfare.
- (6) The governing body or the zoning hearing board, as the case may be, shall render its decision within 45 days after the conclusion of the last hearing.
- (7) If the governing body or the zoning board, as the case may be, fails to act on the landowner's request within the time limits referred to in paragraph (6), a denial of the request is deemed to have occurred on the 46th day after the close of the last hearing.
- (d) The zoning hearing board or governing body, as the case may be, shall commence its hearings within 60 days after the request is filed unless the landowner requests or consents to an extension of time.
- (e) Public notice of the hearing shall include notice that the validity of the ordinance or map is in question and shall give the place where and the times when a copy of the request, including any plans, explanatory material or proposed amendments may be examined by the public.
- (f) The challenge shall be deemed denied when:
 - (1) the zoning hearing board or governing body, as the case may be, fails to commence the hearing within the time limits set forth in subsection (d);
 - (2) the governing body notifies the landowner that it will not adopt the curative amendment;
 - (3) the governing body adopts another curative amendment which is unacceptable to the landowner; or
 - (4) the zoning hearing board or governing body, as the case may be, fails to act on the request 45 days after the close of the last hearing on the request, unless the time is extended by mutual consent by the landowner and municipality.
- (g) Where, after the effective date of this act, a curative amendment proposal is approved by the grant of a curative amendment application by the governing body pursuant to section 909.1(b)(4) or a validity challenge is sustained by the zoning hearing board pursuant to section 909.1(a)(1) or the court acts finally on appeal from denial of a curative amendment proposal or a validity challenge, and the proposal or challenge so approved requires a further application for subdivision or land development, the developer shall have two years from the date of such approval to file an application for preliminary or tentative approval pursuant to Article V or VII. Within the two-year period, no subsequent change or amendment in the zoning, subdivision or other governing ordinance or plan shall be applied in any manner which adversely affects the rights of the applicant as granted in the curative amendment or the sustained validity challenge. Upon the filing of the preliminary or tentative plan, the provisions of section 508(4) shall apply. Where the proposal appended to the curative amendment application or the validity challenge is approved but does not require further application under any subdivision or land development ordinance, the developer shall have one year within which to file for a building permit. Within the one-year period, no subsequent change or amendment in the zoning, subdivision or other governing ordinance or plan shall be applied in any manner which adversely affects the rights of the applicant as granted in the curative amendment or the sustained validity challenge. During these protected periods, the court shall retain or assume jurisdiction for the purpose of awarding such supplemental relief as may be necessary.

(h) Where municipalities have adopted a multimunicipal comprehensive plan pursuant to Article XI but have not adopted a joint municipal ordinance pursuant to Article VIII-A and all municipalities participating in the multimunicipal comprehensive plan have adopted and are administering zoning ordinances generally consistent with the provisions of the multimunicipal comprehensive plan, and a challenge is brought to the validity of a zoning ordinance of a participating municipality involving a proposed use, then the zoning hearing board or governing body, as the case may be, shall consider the availability of uses under zoning ordinances within the municipalities participating in the multimunicipal comprehensive plan within a reasonable geographic area and shall not limit its consideration to the application of the zoning ordinance on the municipality whose zoning ordinance is being challenged.

(i) A landowner who has challenged on substantive grounds the validity of a zoning ordinance or map either by submission of a curative amendment to the governing body under subsection (a) (2) or to the zoning hearing board under section 909.1 (a) (1) shall not submit any additional substantive challenges involving the same parcel, group of parcels or part thereof until such time as the status of the landowner's original challenge has been finally determined or withdrawn: Provided, however, that if after the date of the landowner's original challenge the municipality adopts a substantially new or different zoning ordinance or zoning map, the landowner may file a second substantive challenge to the new or different zoning ordinance or zoning map under subsection (a).

Section 916.2. Procedure to Obtain Preliminary Opinion. In order not to unreasonably delay the time when a landowner may secure assurance that the ordinance or map under which he proposed to build is free from challenge, and recognizing that the procedure for preliminary approval of his development may be too cumbersome or may be unavailable, the landowner may advance the date from which time for any challenge to the ordinance or map will run under section 914.1 by the following procedure:

- (1) The landowner may submit plans and other materials describing his proposed use or development to the zoning officer for a preliminary opinion as to their compliance with the applicable ordinances and maps. Such plans and other materials shall not be required to meet the standards prescribed for preliminary, tentative or final approval or for the issuance of a building permit so long as they provide reasonable notice of the proposed use or development and a sufficient basis for a preliminary opinion as to its compliance.
- (2) If the zoning officer's preliminary opinion is that the use or development complies with the ordinance or map, notice thereof shall be published once each week for two successive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipality. Such notice shall include a general description of the proposed use or development and its location, by some readily identifiable directive, and the place and times where the plans and other materials may be examined by the public. The favorable preliminary approval under section 914.1 and the time therein specified for commencing a proceeding with the board shall run from the time when the second notice thereof has been published.

Section 917. Applicability of Ordinance Amendments. When an application for either a special exception or a conditional use has been filed with either the zoning hearing board or governing body, as relevant, and the subject matter of such application would ultimately constitute either a land development as defined in section 107 or a subdivision as defined in section 107, no change or amendment of the zoning, subdivision or other governing ordinance or plans shall affect the decision on such application adversely to the applicant and the applicant shall be entitled to a decision in accordance with the provisions of the governing ordinances or plans as they stood at the time the application was duly filed. Provided, further, should such an application be approved by either the zoning hearing board or governing body, as relevant, applicant shall be entitled to proceed with the submission of either land development or subdivision plans within a period of six months or longer as may be approved by either the zoning hearing board or the governing body following the date of such approval in accordance with the provisions of the governing ordinances or plans as they stood at the time the

application was duly filed before either the zoning hearing board or governing body, as relevant. If either a land development or subdivision plan is so filed within said period, such plan shall be subject to the provisions of section 508(1) through (4), and specifically to the time limitations of section 508(4) which shall commence as of the date of filing such land development or subdivision plan.

Section 918. Special Applicability Provisions. A municipal zoning ordinance enacted on or before August 21, 2000 shall not be invalidated, superseded or affected by any amendatory provision of the act of June 22, 2000 (P.L. 483 No.67), entitled “An act amending the act of July 31, 1968 (P.L.805, No.247), entitled, as amended, ‘An act to empower cities of the second class a, and third class, boroughs, incorporated towns, townships of the first and second classes including those within a county of the second class and counties of the second through eighth classes, individually or jointly, to plan their development and to govern the same by zoning, subdivision and land development ordinances, planned residential development and other ordinances, by official maps, by the reservation of certain land for future public purpose and by the acquisition of such land; to promote the conservation of energy through the use of planning practices and to promote the effective utilization of renewable energy sources; providing for the establishment of planning commissions, planning departments, planning committees and zoning hearing boards, authorizing them to charge fees, make inspections and hold public hearings; providing for mediation; providing for transferable development rights; providing for appropriations, appeals to courts and penalties for violations; and repealing acts and parts of acts,’ adding definitions; providing for intergovernmental cooperative planning and implementation agreements; further providing for repeals; and making an editorial change,” or the act of June 22, 2000 (P.L.495, No.68), entitled “An act amending the act of July 31, 1968 (P.L.805, No.247), entitled, as amended, ‘An act to empower cities of the second class a, and third class, boroughs, incorporated towns, townships of the first and second classes including those within a county of the second class and counties of the second through eighth classes, individually or jointly, to plan their development and to govern the same by zoning, subdivision and land development ordinances, planned residential development and other ordinances, by official maps, by the reservation of certain land for future public purpose and by the acquisition of such land; to promote the conservation of energy through the use of planning practices and to promote the effective utilization of renewable energy sources; providing for the establishment of planning commissions, planning departments, planning committees and zoning hearing boards, authorizing them to charge fees, make inspections and hold public hearings; providing for mediation; providing for transferable development rights; providing for appropriations, appeals to courts and penalties for violations; and repealing acts and parts of acts,’ further providing for the purpose of the act; adding certain definitions; further providing for various matters relating to the comprehensive plan and for compliance by counties; providing for funding for municipal planning and for neighboring municipalities; further providing for certain ordinances; adding provisions relating to projects of regional impact; providing for traditional neighborhood development; further providing for grant of power, for contents of subdivision and land development ordinance, for approval of plats and for recording of plats and deeds; and providing for municipal authorities and water companies and for transferable development rights,” and such ordinance provisions shall continue in full force and effect until February 21, 2001; provided, however, any such ordinance shall be subject to such amendatory provisions on and after February 22, 2001.