

## MEMO

August 26, 2021

To: Borough Assembly

From: Planning Commission

Re: Ordinance 2021-13

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We are writing in support of ordinance 2021-13 allowing Assembly members (and Planning Commission members) attending by teleconference to be counted toward a meeting quorum.

The Planning Commission meets monthly. Commissioners, applicants, and interested parties attempt to schedule travel and other commitments to attend these meetings, but unfortunately, on occasion, it is necessary to cancel meetings for lack of quorum. Not only does this delay consideration of applications but often results in applicants or interested persons being unable to attend the next meeting. Moreover, the process for certain applications requires two meetings, a canceled meeting stretches the time to at least 3+ months to process certain permits.

The Planning Commission's role is very different than the Assembly in that the Commission applies zoning code criteria to information submitted by the applicant and interested parties prior to or during the meeting. The commission members do not engage in *ex parte* communication, so the only information the commissioners may consider during deliberations is what is before them at the meeting.

Therefore, ensuring the public can speak directly to commissioners and present information, including photos and maps, at a meeting that can be reviewed by all commissioners is important to the commission's process.

Given the borough's recent investment in virtual meeting technology, we believe we can meet the needs and expectations of the public by using videoconferencing to reduce the number of meetings canceled for lack of quorum, but still provide a way for the public to share information with all commissioners, even those participating remotely.

We appreciate your consideration of this issue and encourage you to support this ordinance change.