

Public Meetings vs. Public Hearings

The terms “public meeting” and “public hearing” are often used interchangeable but do not have the same legal meaning. Below is a brief explanation of the differences.

Public Meetings:

- The public must be allowed to attend and listen to deliberations and proceedings (A.R.S. § 38-431.01 A)
- There is no right established in the open meeting law for the public to participate or address the public body. (Ariz. Atty Gen. Op. 78-1)

Public Hearings:

- By statutory authority certain actions of the public body require allowing input from the public. These are generally referred to as a “Public Hearing”.
- As an example, Arizona Revised Statutes, Section 9-461.06, relating to adoption of general plans, states as follows: “...shall hold two or more public hearings at different locations within the municipality to promote citizen participation.”