

City of Asheville overcomes security and equity hurdles with first virtual public meeting

The City of Asheville, North Carolina — like many organizations across the country — wants to maintain a relationship with their residents and keep projects on track during a time of social distancing and reopening.

Asheville's first virtual public meeting was on May 26, 2020. On the agenda were key items such as land use and budget amendments — as well as The 2019-20 Annual Action Plan to allocate funds to help prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.



With PublicInput's virtual meetings, city council was able to ensure equity of access by hosting the meeting on a public page that did not require an app download, username, or password. The meeting also facilitated toll-free dial-in access for an unlimited number of attendees.

This low barrier to entry resulted in **150 residents** attending the meeting. The council accepted public comment online, live over the phone, and by voicemail. All were recorded and transcribed automatically.

Meanwhile, through a two-way system that creates a 'secure back room' for city council members, the meeting was orderly and safe from hijacking without violating Sunshine Laws.

In April and May of 2020, over 30 organizations have hosted 150+ virtual public meetings on PublicInput.com. On average, they saw 240% greater participation while yielding time and cost savings. Schedule an intro call to learn more at PublicInput.com/Demo.

The reviews are in: Asheville created this movie poster to celebrate the success of their first virtual public meeting.