

Hi Becca and Alison,

As chair of the Hartford Board of Civil Authority/Abatement I am concerned about the mandatory requirement for remote access .

1. Technology is not yet at the point to make this feasible nor is it appropriate for all situations. Both the major expense and technological difficulties are problems.

2. Quasi Judicial hearings for abatements and property appraisals are covered by statute. Appellant requests and Board questions are open to the public but public cannot participate. Deliberations where the most consequential discussions take place and site visits are closed. Mandatory remote access does not enhance transparency.

3. With regard for Board operation, a quorum is required for abatements. For us that is at least 13 members who all must hear the entire procedure or cannot vote. Any member with technical issues, even momentarily, compromises that quorum. Rescheduling is time consuming and costly.

4. Deliberations are not public and there is a concern for privacy when Board members have varying conditions for remote access.

Again the issue is the mandatory requirement. For the BCA it serves neither public transparency nor effective operations of the Board. I hope you can either "encourage " remote access or exempt BCAs. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for considering this and for your efforts to make Vermont a great place to live.

Nancy Howe