How to join a Zoom meeting using your computer

By John Krout

You can enjoy an NVPS meeting from just about anywhere your computer has a connection to the Internet. It works on both Windows and Macintosh computers.

First of all, if you have never before joined a Zoom meeting, please be aware that the Zoom.us web site will install a program on your computer when you first prepare to join a meeting. The program is called the **Zoom client app**, though it has a very long and convoluted file name, and it does not occupy a vast amount of hard drive space. It takes a few minutes to down and install the Zoom client app.

After the first time, all you do is start the Zoom client application on your computer.

Second, every Zoom meeting has a Zoom **Meeting ID**. These are assigned by Zoom to Zoom account holders.

You do NOT need to be a Zoom account holder to join a Zoom meeting. However, you do have to know the Zoom Meeting ID in order to join a Zoom meeting. NVPS will make the club's Zoom Meeting ID available to you as soon as possible, and may have done so before publication of this article.

FIRST TIME, STEP BY STEP

Now let's go through the process of joining a Zoom meeting using your computer for the very first time.

This first-time process takes several minutes. It is a good idea to start maybe an hour or so before the scheduled start time of the meeting, if you want to see the entire meeting. It is an even better idea to do the install the night before the next meeting, when you have no time pressure.

I captured the screen images using a Windows 7 computer and the Chrome web browser. Zoom also works on Macintosh computers, though the file names of the application and installer may differ.

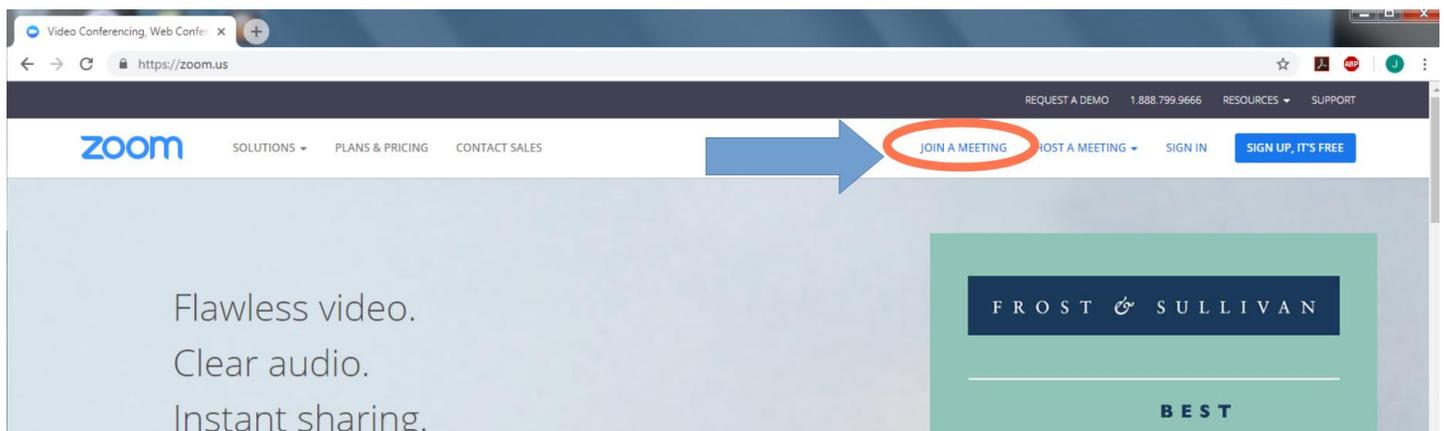1. Go to the Zoom.us web site. Here is the link: https://zoom.us

Illustration 1 shows that page, with the link to Join a Meeting circled.

2. On the Zoom.us home page, Click on the Join a Meeting link.

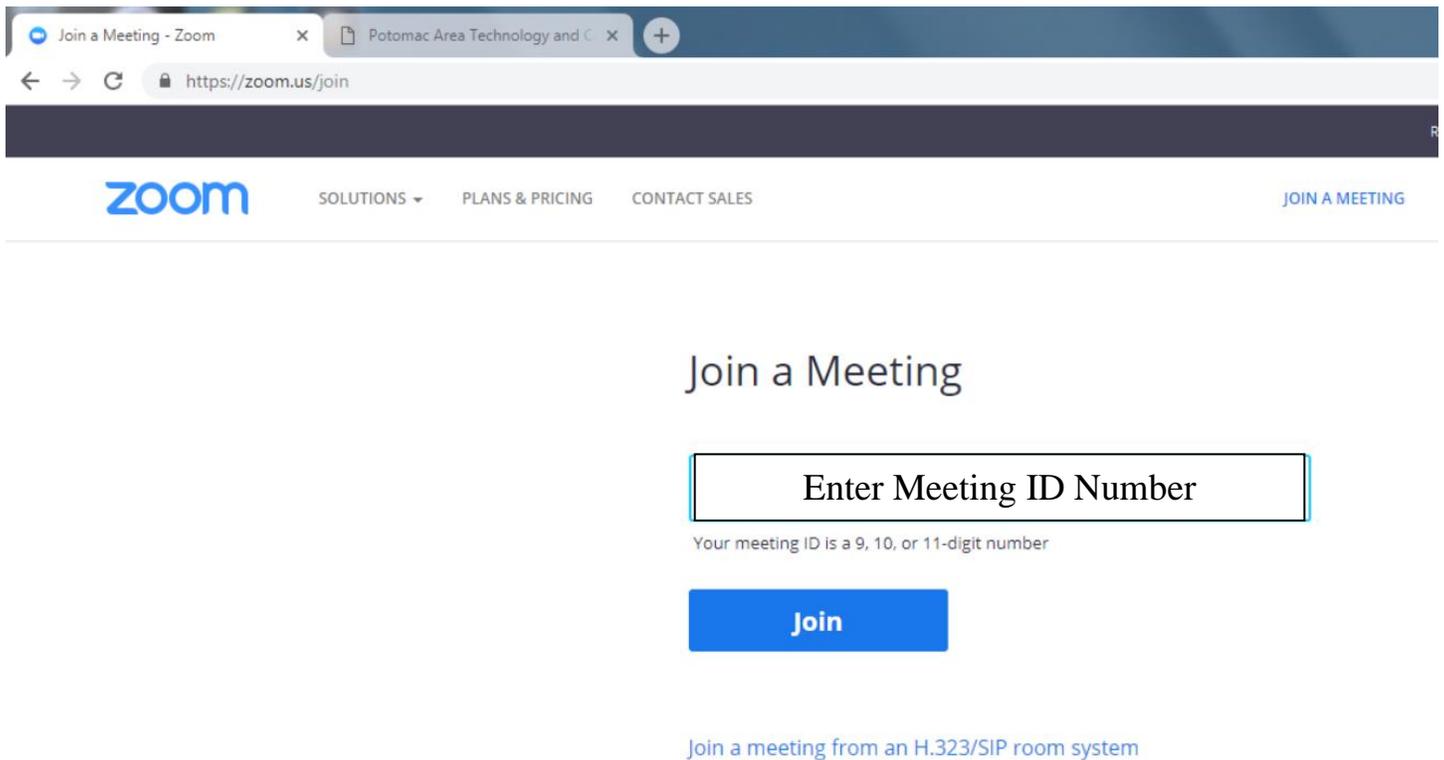Then click open the Zoom.us Join a meeting page. **Illustration 2** shows that page.

Illustration 2

This is where you fill in the Meeting ID number. The Meeting ID shown is NOT the NVPS Meeting ID.

3. After filling in the Meeting ID number, click on the Join button on that page.

At that point, the Zoom.us site will check to see if you have already installed the Zoom client application. Since this is your first time accessing a Zoom meeting using this computer, you do NOT yet have the Zoom client application installed.

So the site, as shown in **Illustration 3** below, tries to download the client application to your computer. In my case, while I was screen-capturing the illustrations, the download did not start, so I had to click on the **Download Here** link. That click did start the download.
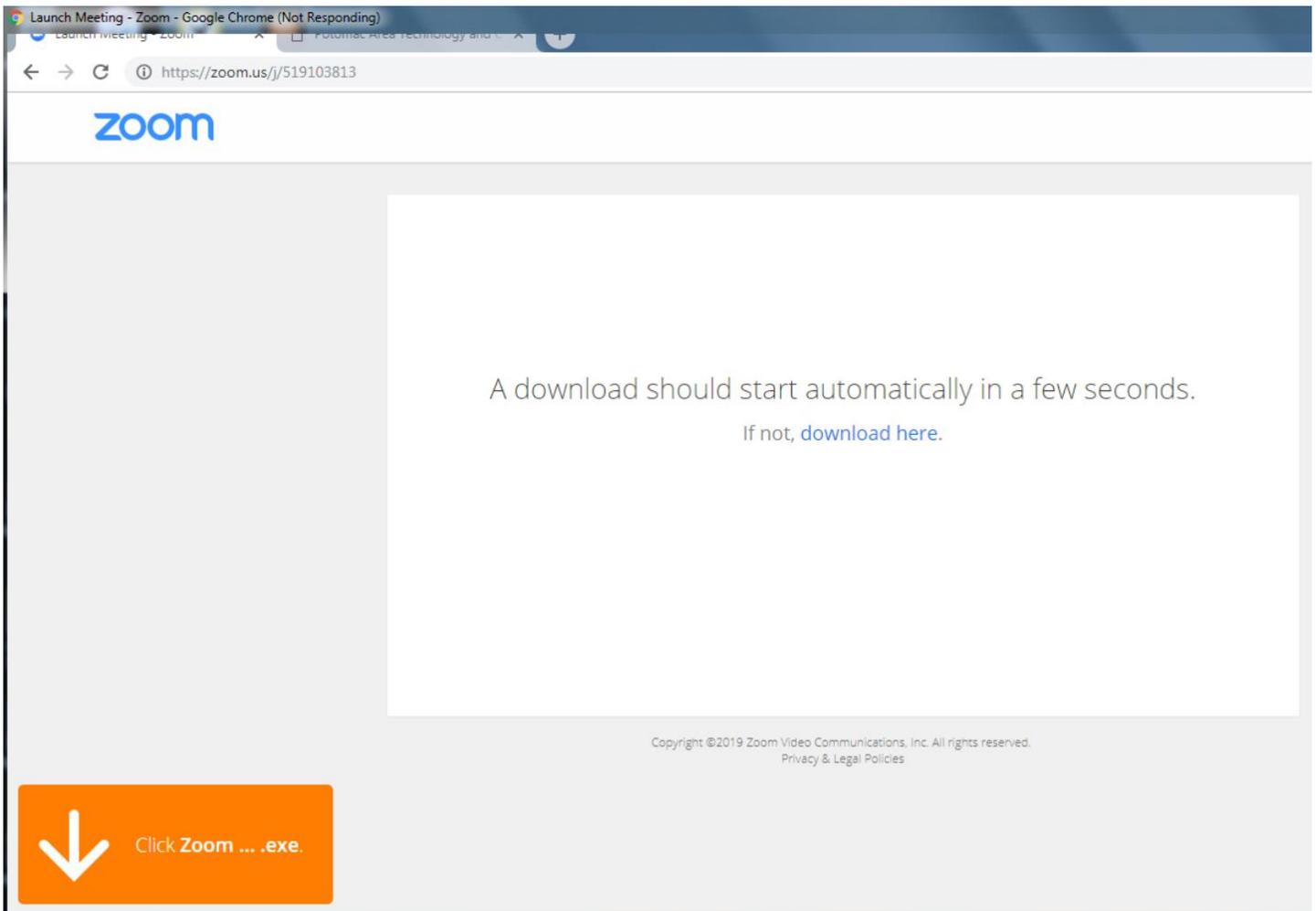
Illustration 3

4. The downloaded installer showed up in a download bar at the bottom of the web browser. The exact form of that download installer notification varies by Web browser.

It is important to wait until the download is completed. Then start the downloaded application by double-clicking on its name.

5. The usual Windows cautionary dialog windows show up. When the installer starts, the computer asks: Do you want to let this program make changes to your computer? Click on the OK or Yes button. When the Zoom client is installed and starts up, the computer asks: Do you want to run this file? Click on the Run button.

6. The Zoom client will display a dialog window asking you to type in your name. it is shown in **Illustration 4** below**. Please fill in your full name.** This info is valuable in many ways. If you have a microphone attached to your computer, or you use the Zoom phone numbers to access the meeting audio over a phone, then you can ask a question and the meeting host will be able to call on you by name. Also, by typing your name, the meeting host is told that you are attending the meeting. If you have a webcam attached to your computer, then you can be seen by other club members who join the same meeting.

The Meeting ID you filled in above is already filled in here. Note that the Meeting ID shown is NOT that of the NVPS. It is shown only as an example.

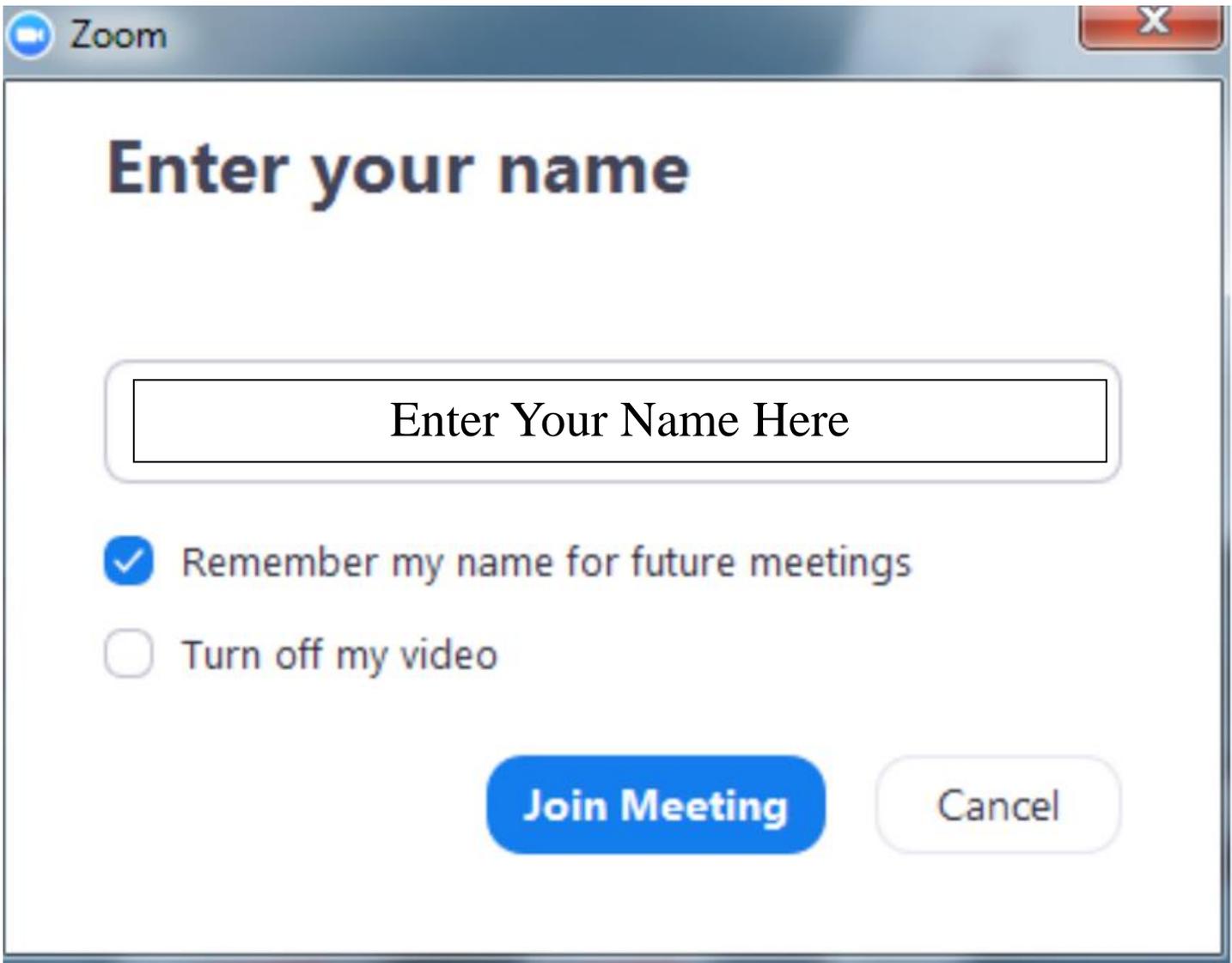Then click on the Join Meeting button.

Illustration 4

7. The Zoom client will take a few minutes to attach to the Meeting ID that you specified on the Zoom web site. It displays the progress window shown in **Illustration 5** while doing that.
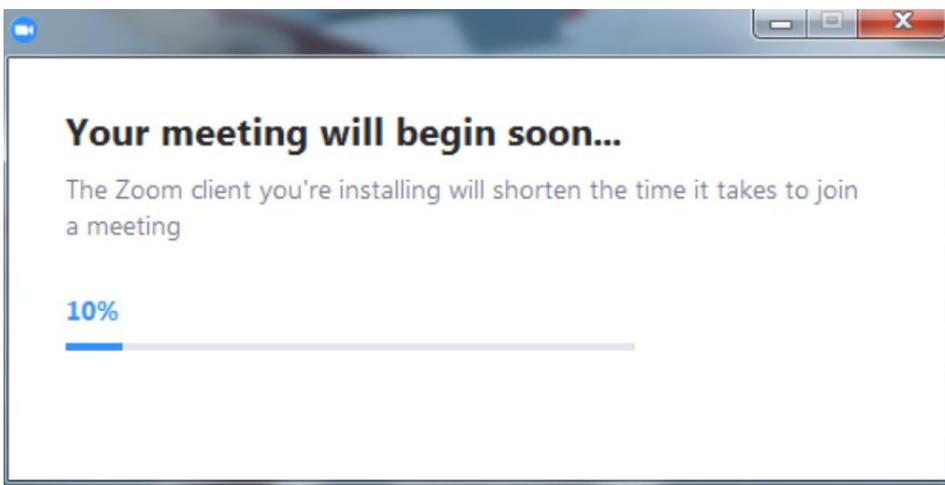

Illustration 5

8. The Zoom meeting main window appears, as shown in **Illustration 6** below. It presents a dialog window as well, asking if you want to listen to the meeting using computer audio. If you listen instead via a phone line, then click on the X in the upper right corner to close the dialog window.

If you are listening to meeting audio via computer, then make sure your computer audio volume is not muted and turned up.

If you have a connected microphone, or a Webcam with a microphone, or a microphone built into your laptop screen, *please use earbuds or headphones to listen to the meeting*. Using a microphone while using speakers runs a risk of creating audio feedback, which can be loud, high-pitched and obnoxious not just for you but for all who listen to the Zoom meeting.
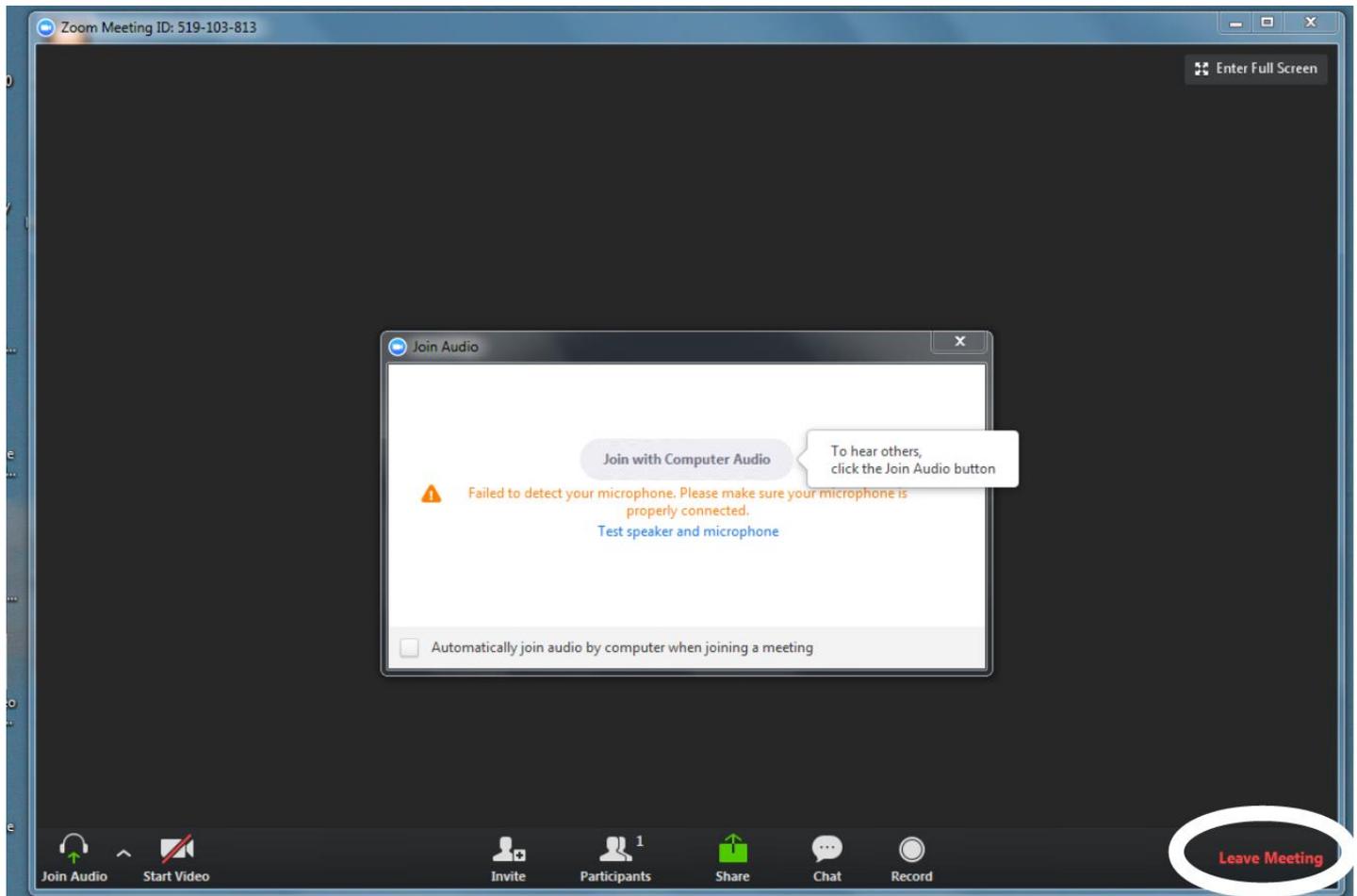

Illustration 6 The Zoom meeting window also includes some other useful gadgets in a bar across the bottom. The most significant is **Leave Meeting**, the red button in the lower right corner, which in the illustration is circled for emphasis. The various buttons may disappear, but will reappear when you move your mouse pointer over that bottom portion of the Zoom meeting window.

Zoom certainly allows you to "join" a meeting that has not started yet. If you have done that, perhaps the night before an NVPS meeting, then the Zoom meeting window will open, but you will see and hear nothing. In that case you can simply click on the Leave Meeting button in the lower right corner, and then follow the instructions below to join the meeting when the meeting actually starts.

JOIN A LATER ZOOM MEETING

If you want to access a Zoom meeting later on, using the same computer, then you already have the Zoom client installed and you can use the Zoom client *without accessing the Zoom.us web site*. The process is a lot quicker than the first-time process, since no download and install is involved.

You will still need to know the Meeting ID number for the meeting you want to join.

1. **Illustration 7** shows the Zoom meeting client in a Windows 7 Start menu. That menu item was installed when the Zoom client itself was installed. Select that menu item.
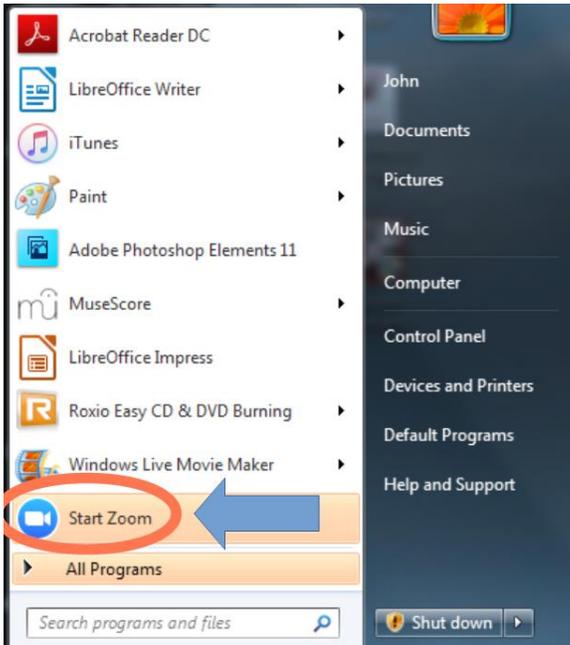

Illustration 7

2. The Zoom Client first window appears, as shown in **Illustration 8**. Click the blue Join a Meeting button. You do *NOT* need to Sign In.

Illustration 8

3. The Zoom Client Join a Meeting window appears, as shown in **Illustration 9** below. You fill in the Meeting ID number, and your full name. Then click on the Join button at the bottom of the window. Note, after you use a Meeting ID once, Zoom remembers it. You can re-use it by tapping on the down arrow at the right of the Meeting ID field, to see a menu of

past Meeting IDs.

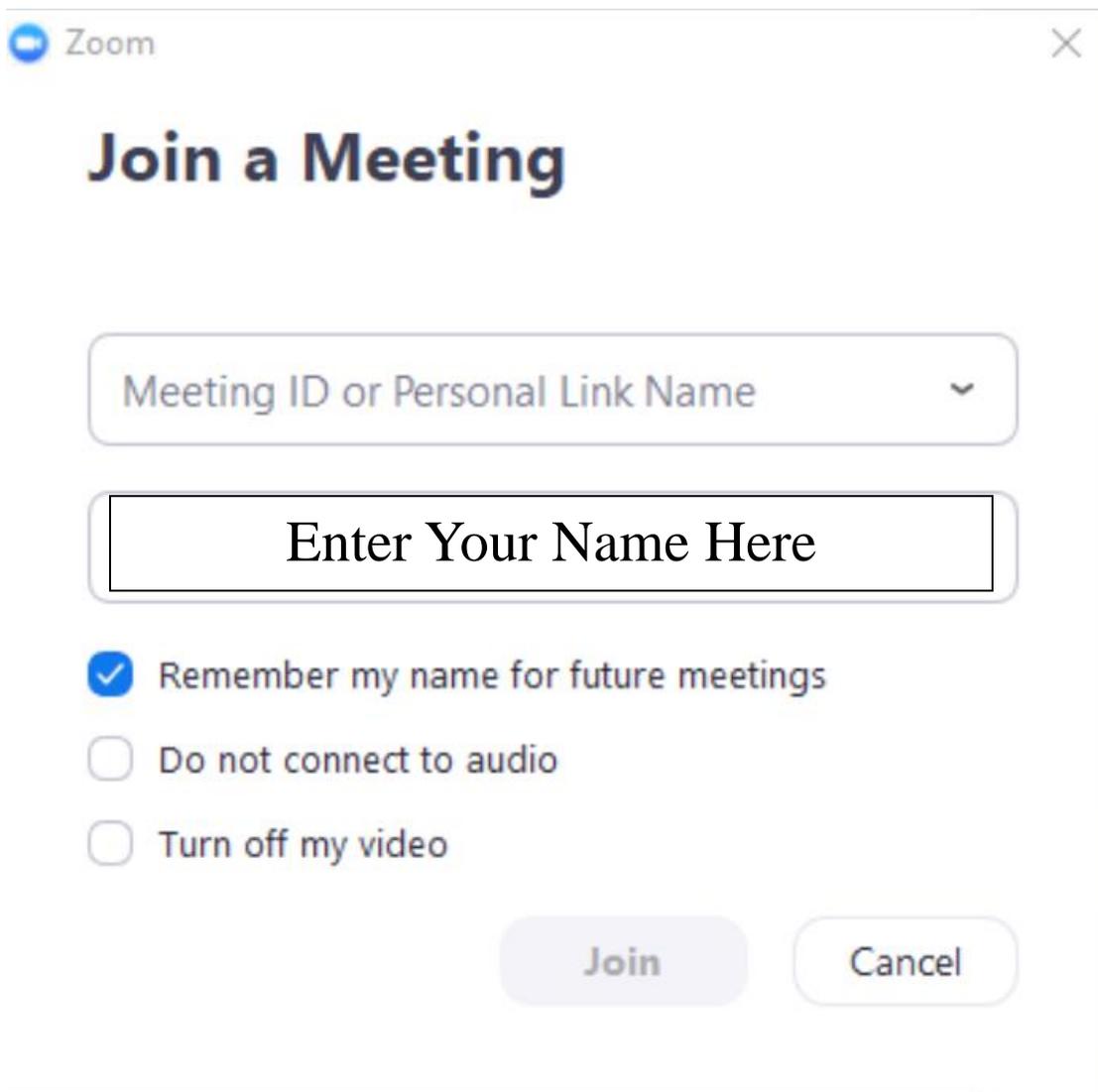4. It still takes some time for the Zoom client to connect to the Meeting ID you specified.

Illustration 9

5. The Zoom meeting window appears, as shown in Illustration 6 above, with all the same buttons.

A TIP

The down-arrow to the right of the Meeting ID field in the Zoom application can be clicked. It produced a history list of recently-used Meeting Ids, with the most recent Meeting ID at the top. If you use the Zoom app ONLY to connect to NVPS meetings, then that NVPS Zoom Meeting ID will be the only ID in the list. So you cna use the list to choose it, rather than remember it and type it.