Keeping Effective

Getting To Good Planning

Mark C. Spelbring

Review Your Responsibilities

1) To represent the rest of the community.
2) To educate yourself and others on the issue(s).
3) To support the process and recognize the roles of the other participants.
4) To make a defensible decision.

Getting To Good Planning

Working with Elected Officials

• Understand the local government framework!
• Elected officials MUST be on board for success
  • If they serve on your Commission, it helps
  • Report to them on your work, including success
  • Pursue enforcement on community concerns
  • Be efficient – spend little and maximize fees
• Can elected officials explain benefits of P & Z to voters?
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Working with Other Officials

- Cooperation with other officials is important
- Some elected officials are great partners
  - Health Department
  - Sheriff’s Department
  - Highway Department

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Meetings

- Be sure meetings are user friendly and give a positive impression to the public
- Remember people may come to only one of your meetings their entire life – don’t make it difficult
- Get a quorum of members to show up!!

Chairing the Meeting

- Chair must understand commission rules and follow them carefully
- Chair must not be afraid to use the gavel
- Keep discussion focused on relevant issues
- Don’t allow questions/comments on extraneous issue – it gives the audience the impression the commission has authority in those matters
Typical PC President’s Routine

• Deliver a "play by play" or translation for the audience when necessary ("that ends the applicant's presentation, now he can only respond to questions") and repeat/rephrase all questions
• Keep control of the meeting -- be firm when necessary and make sure all remarks go through you (not between opponents and proponents).

Meeting and Hearing Conduct

• Display and demand good manners
• Discuss this behavior as part of President’s opening remarks:
  – Address all comments and questions to the Plan Commission President
  – Address everyone with title of respect (Mr. Ms. etc.)

Role of Members at Meetings

• Be familiar with the material -- don't open your packet at the meeting!
• Have a public discussion -- don't pass notes or whisper
• Explain yourself -- why are you voting this way?
• Make sure your input is meaningful
How To Conduct Yourself

- Don’t be difficult or act like a big shot
- Don’t be more formal than necessary -- try to put people at ease
- Treat others the way you want to be treated (the golden rule)
- No preconceptions -- really listen, then form your opinion
- Never forget that you have an audience!

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Media Relations

- Work with media to show benefits of P & Z
- Make meetings easy to understand and report on
- Give press any positive stories you can
- Use press for public education

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Public Education

- To gain and maintain public support, benefits of planning and zoning must be visible
- React quickly when public nuisance type complaints are received
- If the public perception is that you can’t do anything to solve problems, it will be tough
Getting To Good Planning Approval Process

- Processes should be clear and understandable to petitioners and public
- Petitioners should know what to expect
- Timely handling of processes

Decision-Making Concerns

- Peer Pressure
- Public Pressure
- Developer & Business Pressure
- Political Pressure

Decision-Making Concerns

- Compromise –
  - Middle position – may leave all unhappy
  - Participants learn the game
  - Look for win-win
- Outside Influences –
  - Daily contact with people
  - Avoid discussions and disclose them when you can’t
Making Good Decisions
Substance Checklist
• Does regulation advance the public interest?
• Is the regulation a reasonable way to accomplish that public interest?
• Does the regulation allow a reasonable economic use of property?
• Are regulations fairly applied?

Effective Teamwork is Important
• Members
• Chair
• Staff
• Attorney