

Planning and Zoning Process Improvement

December 11, 2006

City Council

Planning and Zoning Process Improvement

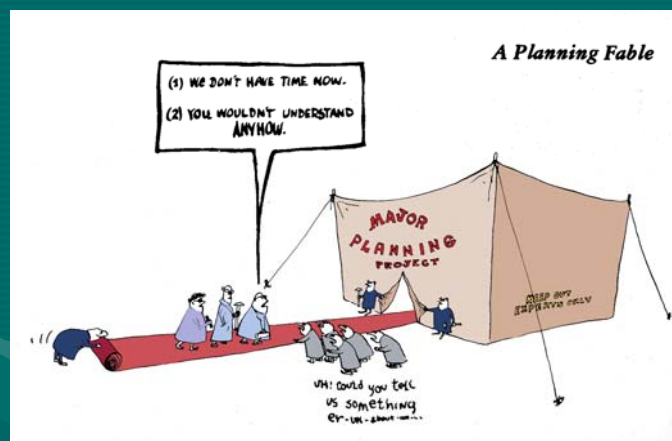
Review of Timeline

- January 2005: Council directs Planning and Zoning Commission to review strengths and weaknesses of planning and zoning process
- March 2005: Stakeholders Working Group convenes
- April 2006: Council Work Session

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- June 2006: Stakeholders Working Group completes report; Planning & Zoning Commission recommends to Council
- November 2006: Council Work Session
- *Next step: Break down the report into manageable parts, review implementation steps*

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Report recommendations – topic areas:

- A. Public participation
- B. Mediation as an Option
- C. Differentiation in Process and Procedures
- D. Elimination of Duplicate Hearings
- E. Planning and Zoning Education

Proposal: Four work sessions: One each on A, B, C, D (mediation, part B, to be the last); Education, part E understood to be a continuing responsibility of the planning staff and the commissioners

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Existing notification procedures: Timing

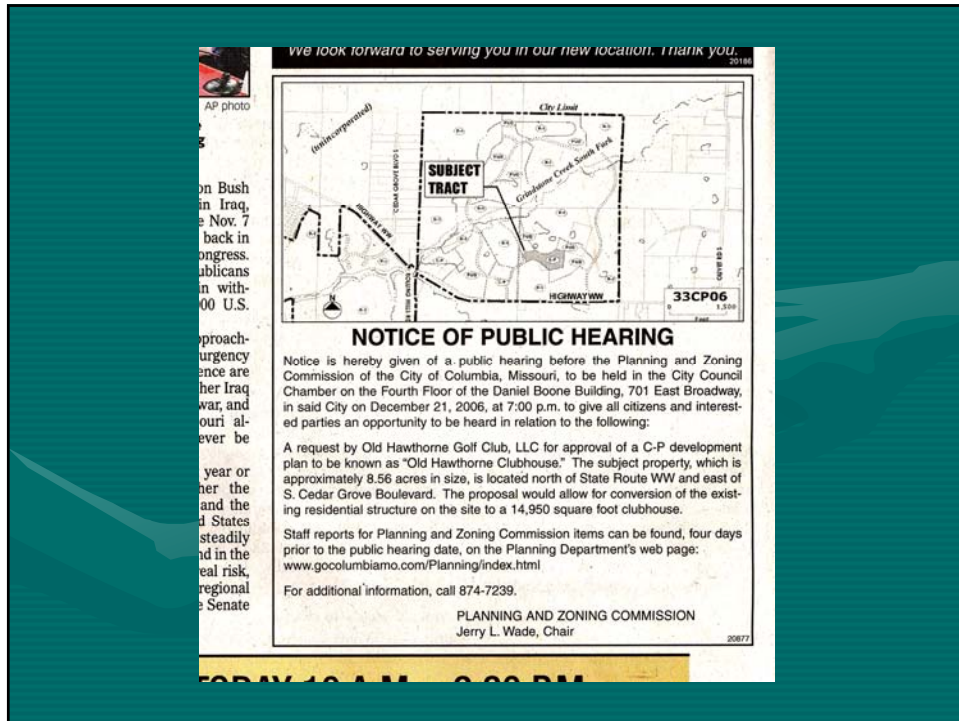
- 15-day newspaper notice for **zoning** public hearings – required
- “Courtesy” notice by letter to property owners within 185 feet and organized neighborhood associations; 15 days +/-
- “Courtesy” notice by sign on affected property, 7 days +/- before hearing
- Planning and Zoning Commission agenda and report posted 6 days prior to hearing

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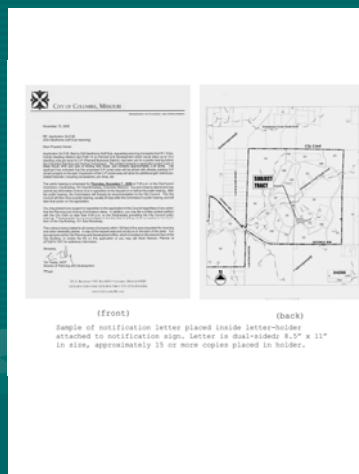
Existing notification procedures: Content and message

- **Newspaper:** Time, place, purpose of hearing and location map
- **Letter:** Summarizes request, time and place of hearing; invites participants to speak for or against proposal; explains protest petition rules; attaches map
- **Sign:** Announces a zoning or plan request in block letters; pocket contains letter & map for “walk-ups”

Critique: Message, particularly in the letter, a) Not always clear; and b) encourages citizens to choose sides.



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Report recommendations:

“Increase and expand notices” (A.1)

“1. Provide **earlier and better quality notice**; 2. Have Planning and Development host an **early informational meeting** to describe the proposal and process; 3. Hold **concept review meetings** for requests to establish Planned Unit Development (PUD), Planned Office (O-P), Planned Business (C-P), and Planned Manufacturing (M-P) zoning districts, and for preliminary plats, minor subdivision final plats, and tract splits. Informal pre-application consultations with Planning and Development staff are encouraged for other development classifications; 4. For any requested or required concept review meeting with City staff, **e-mail or regular mail notification of the meeting shall be sent to interested parties**, defined as follows: a. Owners and residents of record within a 200-foot radius of the subject property; b) Organized and City recognized neighborhood associations within a 1,000 foot radius of the subject property; and c) All persons and organizations that have registered their name and address with the City, according to criteria to be determined.”(A.3)

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Staff suggestions

- Add Planning and Development Department services to City web mail options: 1) Notice of concept review meetings held and applications received (i.e., an “activity report”) and 2) Notice of public meetings with link to PZC agendas and reports
- Notify City Council members of applications filed and concept review meetings convened.
- Make concept review meetings a required, not a recommended step.
- Create a separate registry of interested party organizations for use on special projects in addition to “routine” zoning matters. Questionnaire would allow stakeholder groups to indicate what topics interest them.
- In addition to registered “interested parties,” provide notice by mail to recognized neighborhood organizations within 1,000 feet; property owners within 200 feet of applications received and concept review meetings convened. Such notice would occur a minimum of 30 days before any public hearing.
- Planning and Development Department to conduct “public information meetings” twice a month to review new applications received. Meetings would occur a minimum of 15 days before a public hearing on any of the items reviewed.

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- Require, by ordinance, public notices in manner described.
- Set, by ordinance, time limits on advisory decisions to a maximum number of days after the hearing date.
- Limit tabling of cases to maintain focus (example: “Two times or two months”).
- Staff to provide a review of next steps for each case after hearings are concluded.
- Revise notice letter contents to: 1) Clearly state the request and what it means; 2) Invite the recipient to contribute facts – not choose sides ; and 3) Attach the hearing rules (“simple” or “complex”).
- Maintain copies of staff reports at public hearings.
- Maintain a sign-in list of persons who wish to speak at the hearing (notifies chairman how many speakers are anticipated).
- Distribute customer comment cards at meetings

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Report recommendation: “Greatly expand educational outreach on the Planning and Development process and regulations.”

Existing educational outreach efforts:

- Brochures: rezoning, subdivision process
- Planning and Development Department, PZC web pages: Applications, time lines, agendas, reports, plans
- Agendas include hearing rules on reverse side
- Occasional, *ad hoc* speaking engagements

Critique: Need to develop two-way communications

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Staff suggestions:

- Revise report format: Report should always relate the part (application) to the whole (City plans, policies and ordinances). Also explain procedural requirements in reports.
- Issue press releases on new projects and special public meetings.
- Maintain a “condensed” comprehensive plan for public inspection.
- Encourage public engagement in preparation of plans, especially CATSO Transportation Plan; CIP; special area or neighborhood plans; and future comprehensive plan or general plan.
- Prepare educational work shops and develop a work shop program for interested parties.