



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

ARLINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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TO: Planning Commissioners
Site Plan Review Working Group Members

FROM: Steve Cole, Site Plan Review Working Group Chair

CC: Robert Duffy, Planning Director,
Tom Miller, Current Planning Supervisor
Samia Byrd, Site Plan Review Coordinator
Lisa Maher, DES

DATE: June 12, 2014

RE: June 12 Revisions to the June 4 Site Plan Review Process Document

As a reminder, our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 19 from 7-10:00 p.m.

I have made numerous changes to the draft site plan review process document following our discussion Monday evening. Two new versions are attached, a redline-strikethrough version and one where changes have been incorporated.

Role of Other Commissions/Membership/Participation. Nearly all of these changes relate to site plan review membership/participation. I have changed the following:

- Standing membership now includes only the Transportation and Park and Recreation Commissions, reflecting their broad interest in planning and the public realm and the hope they will participate routinely in reviews.
- Other Commissioners could elect when to be represented on site plan reviews and, for those they choose, which meetings to attend.
- A representative of tenants of a residential building proposed for redevelopment has been added. Representation of adjacent property is proposed to be limited to property owners.
- With respect to At-Large Standing Members, the document has been expanded to include specifically citizens with relevant technical expertise: urban planning, design and architecture.
- The participation requirement for At-Large Standing Members has been lowered from half of site plans in a year to 40 percent.

- With respect to At-Large Former Planning Commissioners, a note has been added that reappointments should not constrain newly retired commissioners from continuing to participate.

Optional Preliminary and Streamlined Reviews. We also discussed the proposed Option Preliminary and Streamlined Reviews. There seemed to be a general consensus that the Optional Preliminary Review should be included as we move the document forward. Our discussion of the Streamlined Review was more wide-ranging. In particular, some suggested that the only difference between a streamlined and full review is the complexity of the proposal. If this were the case, then a full review would be faster in any case for less complex proposals and calling it streamlined may not be needed. When we discussed the other potential benefit of a streamlined process – encouraging some property owners/developers to go through the site plan process rather than develop by right, the view was expressed that it is not merely the length of the review, but also the high cost of preparing a 4.1 submission and complying with standard conditions that discourages developers of relatively modest developments from going through the site plan review process. In response to this notion, I have added a second alternative for a streamlined review to the document. A decision to pursue this latter alternative would require County Board and County Manager approval as deciding whether and when fewer submission requirements and fewer site plan conditions would be appropriate would be in their purviews. This is something that could be further detailed in the implementation phase if the Board and Manager wished to pursue this.

Other Changes. I have also made a few changes to the roles of the site plan review chair and staff that seem to be needed and support the new approach to stakeholder participation in site plan reviews. In addition, I have expanded the section on audience participation to include non-attendees. I have also expanded the ways they might contribute to the review.

Next Steps. In addition to concluding our discussion of the role of other commissions and organizations, membership and participation, optional preliminary and streamlined reviews, we plan to move on to the discussion of the revised agenda/discussion item list, the related meeting choreography, and conclude by discussing changes to submission requirements.