

ARLINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

SITE PLAN CHAIR GUIDE

Excerpts from the SPRC Operating Guide, 1/31/04

Revised March 17, 2010

1. Site Plan Chair Responsibilities

1.1. The SPRC Chair assigns a member of the Planning Commission as a Site Plan Chair for each and every site plan. A Citizen member may chair a site plan at the discretion of the SPRC Chair.

1.2. The Site Plan Chair will be responsible for:

- Assisting staff in the development of the meeting agendas and in identifying site-plan-specific SPRC members.
- Meeting with staff and the applicant in advance of the first SPRC meeting to establish an agenda for review of the site plan.
- Chairing the site plan meeting and using SPRC time efficiently by keeping the meeting on track and focused on the agenda, and controlling revisiting of issues.
- Providing a Site Plan report to the Planning Commission 5 days prior to the public hearing for that site plan.

SITE PLAN MEETINGS FLOWCHART

2. Pre-Planning Meeting

A pre-planning meeting should be held between staff, the Site Plan Chair, and applicant well in advance of to the first SPRC meeting.

2.1. The purpose of a pre-meeting is

- To review the project's status
- To outline major issues already identified, such as non-compliance with County planning documents and policies
- To create the site plan meeting agenda for the first and second meetings
- To review what additional information would be required prior to the meetings
- To review the list and schedule of meetings with other County advisory groups.

3. First Site Plan Meeting

3.1. Introduction to meeting by Site Plan Chair

- Introductions around the room
- Review major responsibilities of the SPRC are the following:
 - ✓ Provide a forum in which the site plan applicant, County staff, the Planning Commission, citizens' community groups, advisory commissions and committees can review, discuss, and comment on a site plan and most major site plan amendment requests filed under Arlington County's Administrative Regulation 4.1.
 - ✓ Ensure that the highest quality of land use planning and design is incorporated into development projects; to promote compliance with the County's Comprehensive Plan, other planning documents and County policies; and to address community concerns and goals.
 - ✓ Advise the Planning Commission on the outstanding issues with regard to a specific plan and any conditions which it might determine to be necessary or appropriate.
- State which agenda topics will be addressed that night, and the order of the meeting (staff/applicant presentation, questions, discussion and attempts to resolve issues, then summing up).
- Site Plan Chair may need to place time limits on the agenda items
- Announce need to sign in as well as to honor meeting rules (highlight the key ones).
 1. Be on time and come prepared.
 2. Do not disturb the meeting in progress when entering the room.
 3. Focus on the issues being discussed, not personalities.
 4. Respect other stakeholders' opinions, even if you may disagree with them.
 5. Be concise, seek clarity, and thoroughly discuss an issue point.

6. When a matter has been "digested" enough, come to a conclusion (consensus or agree to disagree) on issue prior to raising a new issue.
 7. Before speaking, the speaker should be recognized by the Site Plan Chair. Observers may be permitted to join in discussions when recognized by the Site Plan Chair.
 8. Don't interrupt a speaker and avoid side conversations.
- 3.2. Presentation of Proposed Site Plan (following the Master Agenda Format) - by Applicant
- Applicant should present only the parts of the site plan (e.g., site design, architecture, engineering, landscape) that will be discussed at this SPRC meeting, unless understanding of an additional component of the site plan is critical to understanding the agenda items. This will assist the committee to focus the discussion on the material just presented.
- 3.3. Review of relevant planning elements and issues in reference to meeting's agenda - by Staff
- 3.4. Discussion of Site Plan per Agenda - by Site Plan Chair
- As predetermined at the Pre-Meeting with Applicant, Site Plan Chair and Staff
 - Commission and Civic Association reports on items relevant to the agenda, if applicable
 - Review issues for that specific agenda item that are agreed upon and issues to be revisited at the next meeting
- 3.5. Additional presentations by applicant relevant to the next agenda item.
(Sections 2.4 through 2.9 repeat for each major agenda item.)
- 3.6. Wrap-up Review - by Site Plan Chair
- Review issues agreed upon and issues to be revisited.
 - Review what information is to be provided at next meeting and by whom.
 - Review next steps in schedule.

Notes:

- Site Plan meetings should not be held unless there is a reasonable expectation that progress can be made. Staff and chairs should make this clear to applicants and citizens alike. (Note: Sometimes a SPRC meeting is necessary to allow everyone to hear an applicant say why a suggested change will not be made).
- Staff's position or concerns need to be presented as early as possible. The Site Plan Chair should also be advised of staff issues and recommendations as early as possible, not at the last minute.
- Supporting materials required for each of the agenda items must be provided to the site plan staffer no later than one day prior to the mailing of the staff report for the SPRC meeting. The site plan staffer and the Site Plan Chair prior to completion of each meeting agenda will identify supporting material requirements.

4. Second & Third Meeting

- 4.1. Introductions - by Site Plan Chair
 - Determine if meeting attendees were at first meeting and if needed, briefly summarize introductory remarks included in first meeting
 - Announce need to sign in as well as to honor posted meeting rules
- 4.2. Review of items raised at last meeting and now addressed - by Applicant
 - The Applicant should check with Staff prior to the meeting to verify agenda. Any changes to the agenda or major presentation not on the agenda need prior approval by Site Plan Chair and Staff.
- 4.3. Review and update of issues - by Staff
- 4.4. Presentation of new additional Site Plan elements (following the Agenda Format) - by Applicant
- 4.5. Review of issues on Site Plan elements just presented – by Staff.
- 4.6. Discussion of Site Plan per Agenda items - by Site Plan Chair
- 4.7. Site Plan Chair may need time limits on the agenda items. to place
- 4.8. Wrap-up Review - by Site Plan Chair
 - Review issues agreed upon and issues to be revisited.
 - Review what information is to be provided at next meeting and by whom.
 - Review next steps in schedule.

5. MASTER ISSUES AGENDA FOR SITE PLAN MEETING

- Because each site plan is unique and will have different issue priorities, the Master Agenda should be used a guide. This Master Agenda is not comprehensive but provides examples of the types of issues that may be considered under each of the major areas. The overriding guideline is to discuss the issues from macro to micro to the extent the SPRC discussion remains productive. In some

cases, some items listed may not be applicable to the project. The order of the topics listed on the Master Agenda is not reflective of the level of importance of each issue nor of how much time each issue will be given in the SPRC discussion.

- The agenda for each site plan should be included in the SPRC meeting notice via either email or postal mail, which should be distributed at least 5 days prior to the meeting.
- The Site Plan Chair and Staff member should have a very clear list of what needs to be addressed at the next meeting, what issues have been resolved, and what items everyone agrees there is disagreement on BEFORE moving on to the next agenda item. This list should be kept up-to-date as an overall summary of progress of the site plan.

Master Agenda Issues List

- 1) Informational Presentation
 - a) Overview of Site Plan (Applicant)
 - b) Review of Site Plan Proposal (Staff)

- 2) Land Use & Zoning
 - a) Relationship of site to GLUP, sector plans, etc.
 - i) Requested changes (if any)
 - ii) Justification for requested changes (if any)
 - b) Relationship of project to existing zoning
 - i) Special site designations (historic district, etc.)
 - ii) Requested bonus density, height, etc. (if any)
 - iii) Requested modification of use regulations (if any)

- 3) Site Design and Characteristics
 - a) Allocation of uses on the site
 - b) Relationship and orientation of proposed buildings to public space and other buildings
 - c) View vistas through site
 - d) Visibility of site or buildings from significant neighboring perspectives
 - e) Historic status of any existing buildings on site
 - f) Compliance with adopted planning documents

- 4) Building Architecture
 - a) Design Issues
 - i) Building form (height, massing, tapering, setbacks)
 - ii) Facade treatments, materials, fenestration
 - iii) Roof line/penthouse form and materials
 - iv) Street level activism/entrances & exits
 - v) LEED/Earthcraft/Green Home Choice Score
 - vi) Accessibility
 - vii) Historic Preservation (if applicable)
 - b) Retail Spaces (if applicable)
 - i) Location, size, ceiling heights
 - ii) Storefront designs and transparency
 - iii) Mix of tenants (small v. large, local v. national)
 - c) Service Issues
 - i) Utility equipment
 - ii) Venting location and type
 - iii) Location and visibility of loading and trash service
 - iv) Exterior/rooftop lighting

- 5) Transportation
 - a) Infrastructure
 - i) Mass transit facilities and access
 - ii) Street systems (w/existing and proposed cross sections)
 - iii) Vehicular and pedestrian routes
 - iv) Bicycle routes and parking
 - b) Traffic Demand Management Plan
 - c) Automobile Parking

- i) Proposed v. required (tenant, visitor, compact, handicapped, etc.)
 - ii) Access (curb cuts, driveway & drive aisle widths)
 - d) Delivery Issues
 - i) Drop offs
 - ii) Loading docks
 - e) Signage (parking, wayfinding, etc.)
- 6) Open Space
 - a) Orientation and use of open spaces
 - b) Relationship to scenic vistas, natural features and/or adjacent public spaces
 - c) Compliance with existing planning documents and policies
 - d) Landscape plan (incl. tree preservation)
- 7) Community Benefits
 - a) Public Art
 - b) Affordable Housing
 - c) Underground Utilities
 - d) Historic Preservation
 - e) Other
- 8) Construction issues
 - i) Phasing
 - ii) Vehicle staging, parking, and routing
 - iii) Community Liaison

Seeking Consensus

Consensus will be sought in the following manner:

- The Site Plan Chair should sum up any apparent consensus (pro or con) on issues for a site plan and make clear what the next step in the process is.
- At times, if the Site Plan Chair is unclear about the committee's direction on an issue, the Site Plan Chair may ask for a showing of hands to get a sense of where the committee stands on the issue. No formal ballots are taken at SPRC.
- Should it prove difficult to reach a group consensus after reasonable effort, the Site Plan Chair should acknowledge that the issue is one that the committee agrees to disagree on.

ARLINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

1.1 SITE PLAN REPORT – AGENDA ITEM #

Site Plan Project Name & Number
(Submitted by _____, Site Plan Chair)

Reports should be submitted to staff by the Thursday before the Planning Commission hearing.

Meeting Dates:**Project Summary:****Issues addressed and agreed upon by developer:****Outstanding Issues:** (list issues from macro to micro)

Key Issues - Highlight top key issues such as

- Land use / Zoning
 - Compliance to Planning Documents (density, height, bonus density, coverage, setbacks, etc.)
- Site & Building Design
 - Massing, height, tapering, design, materials, uses, retail signage, etc.
- Streets & Traffic Management
 - Access, curb cuts, TDM, radius of curbs, etc.
 - Parking, Visitor and Loading Dock
- Streetscape
 - Sidewalks, trees, etc.
- Affordable Housing
- Historic Preservation
- LEEDS
- Public Art / Cultural Amenity