



## Department of Planning and Zoning

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*A guide to conducting a*

### **Pre-Application Neighborhood Public Meeting**

Pre-application neighborhood public meetings are intended to provide an opportunity for:

- residents to become aware of new development projects proposed in their neighborhood at an early stage of its conceptual design;
- residents and applicants to meet and discuss proposed developments; and,
- the applicant to take into consideration neighborhood feedback on a proposed development.

This community dialogue takes place entirely outside of the formal public hearing process and well in advance of incurring major detailed design and engineering expenses. While feedback from the neighborhood is not binding on the applicant, an open and collaborative dialogue is expected. A clear understanding of the project and of potential issues and opportunities will benefit both applicant and neighbors alike during the application review process.

#### **1. What types of projects are required to hold a Pre-Application Neighborhood Public Meeting?**

The requirement to hold a Pre-Application Public Neighborhood Meeting applies to all development involving the construction of **five (5) or more dwelling units** and/or **ten thousand (10,000) s.f. or more of gross floor area of non-residential development**.

#### **2. At what point should these meeting occur?**

One or more neighborhood presentations of a proposed project at a public meeting is **required prior to applying for a zoning permit** from the Dept. of Planning and Zoning.

In order to encourage a meaningful discussion for the neighbors but at limited expense to the applicant, the meeting should occur while the project is still at a **conceptual design stage** but sometime between 2-12 months prior to the anticipated filing an actual permit application for formal review by the City.

### **3. What is the best venue for holding such a meeting?**

While not required, the preferred, and best, venue for a public neighborhood meeting is at a regular monthly or even special meeting of the respective Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA). In some cases depending on the location of the project, a neighboring NPA may be a logical host or the NPA's may elect to hold a special joint meeting. Every effort on the part of the applicant and the NPA should be taken to make this possible.

The NPA Steering Committee should be contacted (preferably no less than 30 days) prior the desired meeting date in order to get on their agenda. Within two weeks of receiving a request to host a pre-application neighborhood meeting, the NPA should inform the applicant in writing of the date and location of the next available NPA meeting or of the NPA's inability to accommodate the request.

Should the NPA's meeting schedule or agenda not permit timely consideration of the request (preferably within 60 days), the project applicant can organize and host their own neighborhood meeting.

In either event, all meetings must be held in a place accessible to the general public including those with disabilities.

### **4. How are neighbors notified of the meeting?**

Regardless of the venue, the goal is to reach as many neighborhood residents and business as possible, and especially those who may be most impacted by the proposed project with information about the scheduled meeting. The NPA can and should assist the applicant in publicizing the meeting through their regular notification networks (FPF, email list, the BUZZ, etc.) regardless of the location or venue of the meeting.

The project applicant should also make efforts to provide notice of the pre-application public neighborhood meeting (preferably at least 15 days in advance of the meeting) via mail or direct distribution to all abutting property owners and occupants, or those within 400 feet of the project site whichever is greater. A list of address can be obtained from the Dept. of Planning and Zoning, provided a request is made at least 7 days in advance of the date for the mailing.

### **5. What information about the proposal should be made available at the public neighborhood meeting?**

The applicant should be prepared with the following basic information in order to give attendees a clear sense of what is being proposed and support a meaningful discussion:

1. A illustration depicting the layout and design of the proposed development including:
  - Conceptual site plans showing location of proposed buildings, roads, parking areas, landscaping, land uses and lot lines with approximate dimensions
  - Conceptual building design
  - A "development fact sheet" including the size of the proposed project, proposed land uses, number of dwelling units, density of the project, building heights, parking requirements, etc.
2. Information provided by the Dept. of Planning & Zoning explaining the City's formal development review process and how members of the public can participate should also be made available.

### **6. What submission materials will be required by the City at the time of application to document that the neighborhood meeting was held?**

An affidavit or certification from the applicant of having held a public neighborhood meeting including: meeting date, time and location; list of attendees with contact information; NPA meeting minutes or meeting notes summarizing the discussion; and method and copy of public notice. (see attached example)

Email addresses provided on the public neighborhood meeting attendance list can be used by the Dept. of Planning & Zoning for future communications with interested neighbors once the project enters the City's development review process.

**SAMPLE**

**Pre-Application Public Neighborhood Meeting Certification**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that that the Pre-Application Public Neighborhood Meeting requirement pursuant to Sec. 3.2.1(d) of the *Burlington Comprehensive Development Ordinance* has been satisfied in accordance with the procedures and requirements set forth by the Department of Planning and Zoning for a public neighborhood meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

A copy of the meeting date, time and location; list of attendees with contact information; NPA meeting minutes or meeting notes summarizing the discussion; and method and copy of public notice is attached and made a part of this Certification.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF VERMONT

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

The above and foregoing Affidavit as subscribed before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, A.D., 20\_\_\_\_ personally by \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_

NotaryPublic

Seal

My Commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_