

Guidelines for Effective Development Review by Neighborhoods

Overview

As part of the initiative to provide more meaningful neighborhood input into the development review process, recent changes in the review process now affords neighborhoods the ability to weigh in on pending applications. The feedback from residents become part of the public record and are considered as part of the overall review process.

The neighborhood association plays an important role in this process. By reviewing the application, reaching out to residents, collecting feedback and responding to city staff, the association acts as a clearing house for public comments.

This document describes the best practices for the neighborhood association to follow in order to get the most effective and meaningful neighborhood input.

Notices

The city will send notices to the public whenever a development project is being considered. These notices will go to individuals considered to be “affected parties” as well as the neighborhood association. It is important to regularly check P.O. boxes for new notices by development staff, since delays in receiving the notice will decrease the time you have to review the application and elicit feedback from the neighborhood.

Relevant City Department

There are two different departments that handle development applications:

Planning: involved with comprehensive plan amendments, zoning text amendments, street vacations.

Development services: all other applications.

Determine the case planner

Typically notices do not contain the name of the case planner.

To find out who the case planner is:

1. locate the application number, which is on the top of the application. An example of an application number is “23-SP-19” (which stands for the 19th site plan in 2023).
2. contact Development Services at 941-263-6222 ex 36596 or development.services@sarasotafl.gov

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Other case planner contact information

You can also contact the following individuals, particularly when a project has not been assigned to a case planner:

Myra Schwarz,
Development Services General Manager
Myra.Schwarz@sarasotafll.gov

Obtaining information about the application

Through the city's website, you can obtain additional information about the development:

1. Go to Public records search
(<https://edocs.sarasotagov.com/publicaccess/edocs/search/>)
2. Select search type: "Land Development Applications-Keyword"
3. Choose the application type (which is determined by the middle 2 letters in the application number) and enter application number with an asterisk on both sides. For example, for the application number 23-SP-03, enter *23-SP-03* in the application number

Search		Results		
Search Type Land Development Applications - Keyword		Application Number	File Name	Project Name
Enter your search criteria within asterisks into any of the keyword fields and click 'Search'.		23-SP-03	23-SP-03 2ND SUBMISSION	625 GOLDEN GATE RESIDENCES
From Date	To Date	23-SP-03	23-SP-03 ADDITIONAL MATERIAL	625 GOLDEN GATE RESIDENCES
		23-SP-03	23-SP-03 APPLICATION MATERIAL	625 GOLDEN GATE RESIDENCES
Application Type SP - SITE PLAN		23-SP-03	23-SP-03 DRC COMMENTS 23-SP-03	625 GOLDEN GATE RESIDENCES
Application Number *23-SP-03*		23-SP-03	23-SP-03 EXTENSION OF TIME AGREEMENT 5-12-23	625 GOLDEN GATE RESIDENCES
Address		23-SP-03	23-SP-03 GGP LETTER 2-13-23	625 GOLDEN GATE RESIDENCES
Date Filed		23-SP-03	23-SP-03 GGP INPUT	625 GOLDEN GATE RESIDENCES
		23-SP-03	23-SP-03 INCOMPLETE DETERMINATION	625 GOLDEN GATE RESIDENCES
		23-SP-03	23-SP-03 LEGAL INVOICES	625 GOLDEN GATE RESIDENCES
		23-SP-03	23-SP-03 NOTICE OF FILING & MAIL LIST	625 GOLDEN GATE RESIDENCES
		23-SP-03	23-SP-03 REVISED DRC COMMENTS 1-17-23	625 GOLDEN GATE RESIDENCES
		23-SP-03	23-SP-03 REVISED MATERIAL	625 GOLDEN GATE RESIDENCES
		23-SP-03	23-SP-03 TRAFFIC REVIEW	625 GOLDEN GATE RESIDENCES

Note: if no documents are found using the above instructions, try using the search type: "Land Development Applications- Full-Text" and enter the application number in the "Search Term" field.

Review application with neighborhood board

It's important for the board to understand the application in order to effectively communicate to the residents. Review the information obtained from the city's website and reach out to the case planner with any questions.

Each planner typically handles dozens of applications at the same time. Email is typically the most efficient way of communicating with the case planners and remember to always reference the application number in the subject line.

Reach out to the neighborhood

Whether it's done as a neighborhood meeting, through email outreach, or online questionnaire, the association should reach out to the neighborhood to gather feedback from its community, including residents, renters, and property owners.

Individual feedback from the residents will ultimately be presented to the case planner; having that information in a format that they can act upon is important. City staff will handle the technical aspects, such as setbacks, height, etc, so neighborhoods should concentrate on the compatibility aspects of the project (which concerns typically fall into that category). The following are best practices to follow:

Important Practices:

- Be as specific as possible when describing the concern, avoiding comments such as "I don't like it".
- Tie to to a listed factor of compatibility, which includes:
intensity; density; scale; building size, mass, bulk, height and orientation; lot coverage; lot size/configuration; architecture; screening; buffers; setbacks; signage; lighting; traffic circulation patterns; loading area locations; operating hours; noise; odor.

Avoid "other factor" whenever possible.

Helpful Practices:

- Indicate the importance of the concern. This can be done by including a count of residents that raised the concern. It can also be done by including comments from the residents.

The following is a sample form used to organize the neighborhood input; blank forms are included at the end of this document.

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Sample form

Concern:

Air conditioning and other mechanics are located in the rear of the structure, which abuts residential housing. Noise barriers or relocation to front of the building, which is on Orange, would reduce neighborhood impact

Total Number of Residents expressing this concern: 32

Incompatible attribute: noise

Comments:

Resident name: Linda Ellerby

email address: l.ellerby@gmail.com

Detail: I live right behind the proposed condo building. Please move the air conditioning away from the back; I'm concerned about sleeping at night.

Resident name: Jason Freeding

email address: Jasfreed428@yahoo.com

Detail: Must the air condenser be right next to our houses. Other buildings have them in front on Orange Ave. You can't hear those buildings from my street.

Presenting neighborhood input to the case planner

After the association has gathered input from the residents and compiled the comments into a single document, the neighborhood association should send the document to the case planner (preferably by email).

Then a meeting should be scheduled with the case planner to review the neighborhood findings. This provides the neighborhood the opportunity to discuss the feedback as well as follow-up on any clarifying questions that the case planner may have.

Timeline

Keep in mind that statutory restrictions limit the amount of time a neighborhood has to review and respond to any development project.

While different types of applications have different constraints the following example is a good representation of the accelerated time frame for neighborhoods to respond:

Day 1

1. Notice received by neighborhood association.
2. Obtain application.

Day 2-3

1. Obtain information from city website.
2. Review application with board.

Day 4-8

1. Outreach to the neighborhood, gathering feedback.
2. Consolidate comments, complete feedback form and send to case planner.

Day 9-10

1. Send neighborhood feedback back to the case planner and schedule a meeting.
2. Review feedback with the case planner.

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Concern:

Total Number of Residents expressing this concern: _____

Incompatible attribute:

Comments:

Resident name: _____ email address: _____
Detail: _____

Resident name: _____ email address: _____
Detail: _____

Resident name: _____ email address: _____
Detail: _____

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Comments continued

Resident name: Detail:	email address:
Resident name: Detail:	email address:
Resident name: Detail:	email address:
Resident name: Detail:	email address:
Resident name: Detail:	email address: