

Options for Community Meeting Policy for Legislative Land Use Applications

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City Council Work Session

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Purpose

- Review the current community meeting practice in City of Hampton
- Present examples from other localities for a more formal community meeting requirement
- Outline potential new policy for Council's consideration and as baseline for discussion
- Solicit feedback and guidance from Council for potential policy development, if desired

Background

- Hampton Zoning Ordinance does not require a community meeting for rezoning and use permit applications.
- Current practice is to request and encourage applicants to conduct a community meeting in most cases.
- Council members have inquired whether and how the city can require applicants to conduct a community meeting.

Purpose of Community Meetings

- Applicant, staff, Planning Commission, and Council informed of and given the opportunity to address community concerns related to public necessity, convenience, general welfare, or good zoning practices.
- Examples of relevant land use concerns may include
 - Creating and maintaining convenient, attractive, and harmonious communities
 - Congestion of public streets
 - Density concerns related to community facilities
 - Protecting designated historic areas and working waterfronts

Options

- If Council wants to make the community meeting mandatory, the requirement should be implemented in the Zoning Ordinance.
- Range of options include:
 - Require community meeting in all cases, with no process for waiver or exceptions
 - Require community meeting, but include guidelines/process for waiver or exceptions
 - Continue current practice to request or encourage community meetings; but with no ability to require if applicant declines
 - This final option would not require council action

Norfolk Example

- Norfolk zoning ordinance requires a “neighborhood meeting” for all development applications reviewed by the Planning Commission
- Two options for compliance
 - Partner with appropriate neighborhood organization to host the meeting; or
 - Applicant host their own meeting, with notice as prescribed in the ordinance
- No process for staff waiver, but written notification that neighborhood supports the proposal may satisfy the meeting requirement
- Meeting must occur prior Planning Commission public hearing

Charlottesville Example - Under Prior Ordinance

- Prior Charlottesville zoning ordinance required community meeting
- Ordinance authorized department director to develop guidelines for how to provide notice of community meeting and possible waiver of community meeting in appropriate circumstances
- New Charlottesville zoning ordinance adopted in February 2024 no longer includes a general community meeting requirement

Option for New City of Hampton Policy

- Community meetings required for all rezoning and use permit applications, with possible waiver in appropriate cases pursuant to established guidelines
- Applicants must provide notice of community meetings as prescribed; notice requirement may be modified in appropriate cases pursuant to established guidelines
- Ordinance would require Community Meeting to occur before application is advertised for Planning Commission public hearing

Applications Potentially Eligible for Community Meeting Waiver

- Waiver guidelines would be based upon Council objectives and appropriate zoning considerations
- Staff would apply established guidelines to determine whether the community meeting should be waived in a particular case
- Potentially eligible applications may include:
 - City/HRHA/EDA owned properties
 - Businesses in the boundaries of a designated business park
 - Public education facilities, colleges and universities
 - Rezoning when the change aligns with the surrounding uses and future land use goals
 - Not adjacent to residential
 - No anticipated traffic impacts
 - Others?

Recommended Notice Requirement

- All Property owners within a certain radius (e.g., $\frac{3}{4}$ mile);
- Flexibility for staff to allow a lower radius in appropriate cases
- At a minimum same notice required by state code for rezoning - i.e., adjacent owners and owners directly across the street

Discussion Points for Council

- Does Council want to consider a formal community meeting requirement?
- If so, does Council want a blanket requirement in all cases (similar to Norfolk) or a more flexible policy with potential waivers, as outlined by staff?
- If Council desires a more flexible option, what are Council's primary objectives for community meetings?
 - These objectives/concerns would inform policy development, including guidelines for potential waivers or notice modifications.