

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2014

Attendance: Cr. Gaetano Greco – Mayor, Peter Lewinsky – Monitor, Paul Crapper - Director Corporate and Planning Services, Darren Rudd - Manager City Development, Maria Poletti, Marion Coffey, Keith Coffey.

1. Development applications with more than 5 objectors to be decided at Planning Committee should be postponed if there is not a quorum of councilors from the ward. Two of the three elected representatives should be present to represent their residents.  
*The point of having all the councilors on the Planning Committee is so that they can make decisions across the whole city, not just for wards. Still the point was made for local representation.*
2. Verbal submissions should be able to be given in writing; multiple copies can be handed out on the night.  
*Darebin already offer interpreter services and are aware that they need to slow down the speed of their presentations to better accommodate folk who have English as a second language. They will consider the request as a speaker's responsibility.*
3. Agenda should be able to be reorganized to allow late arriving councilors to hear and vote on applications for their ward.
4. Late arriving councilors should not vote on any application where they have not heard all the verbal submissions and follow up discussions.  
*Local government legislation prevents prohibiting councilors from voting, it is their responsibility to make that decision for themselves.*
5. Late arriving councilors should always be asked to declare any conflict of interest on arrival.  
*Already incorporated.*
6. The minutes should show voting on all applications not just when standing orders are requested by councilors.  
*Follow up to see if this is possible under the legislation.*
7. Accuracy of data for councilors should be assured if the planning officer responsible for the recommendation is present to answer questions.  
*A template has been developed to help enable accuracy and consistency of information to councilors. Discussed maybe some flexibility to hear from the gallery to correct incorrect answers.*
8. If letters are sent to objectors requiring those giving verbal submissions to declare by the Friday prior to the meeting the same should hold for applicant and/or their representative. The chair should not allow anyone to present, if they haven't indicated their intentions prior to the meeting.  
*The view was that removing the flexibility to hear late verbal submissions may work against objectors.*
9. All planning application details, including plans should be available on the website and when new plans are submitted during the processing of the application, the revised plans and the reason for revision. An administration fee should be charged on applicants to cover this.  
*Discussion on this issue in a report to be tabled on Monday night's meeting. VCAT has restricted and awarded costs to the applicant if revised plans are circulated by council beyond those 'directly affected'*
10. Non elected planning experts can be asked for their advice on applications/recommendations but should not be given voting rights, especially not deciding voting rights as chairperson, on the Planning Committee. *Done.*

11. Monthly report summary should be produced detailing for each planning application, who is the property owner (i.e. the entity seeking to make the money), who is the architect, who is the planning officer assigned to the application, no. of objections received, planning office recommendation of to grant or not, and voting breakdown.

Can already find this information on the Register.

12. A quarterly report of number of applications heard by VCAT by ward and their outcome.

This information can be found at the back of the Planning Committee Agenda and include the up and coming VCAT hearings.

13. An annual and triennial report of the number of applications by property owner, number approved and rejected by Council, number approved and rejected by VCAT.

Go to the PPRS on line for this data. Also a monthly report is sent to the Department of Planning.

97% of planning objections go through without issue and with less than 5 objectors

Around 3000 planning applications per annum and around 80% have no objectors.

Consideration of making more of the data available in press releases etc.

14. Online regularly updated list of approved developments and those that have lapsed so that residents have increased certainty of what is happening around them. See 13

15. Appoint a planning advocate to review planning officer's recommendations and ensure that approval is not given to applications that do not meet the standards. The advocate should work with the community and residents to represent their concerns and objections.

Some difficulty with this being a planning employee as employees are supposed to be unbiased??

16. Reinstate the mediation process of meeting with objectors even when there are less than 5, as done in Glen Eira city council.

There is a 'notice process' where objectors can ring and arrange to meet with the planning officer at any time and multiple times during the planning application process. This is encouraged. Big group meetings in the past have become dangerous.

Commitment to a follow up meeting 6 months down the track.