

## Memorandum

**Date:** March 30, 2011

**To:** Planning Commission/Commission for Citizen Involvement

**From:** John Sonnen, Planning Director

**Subject:** Establishing a docketing process that would be used to form the long-range work program for the Planning Department, Planning Commission and Historic Review Board.

---

On February 16, 2011, the Planning Commission directed staff to schedule discussion of the docketing proposal at the next Commission for Citizen Involvement meeting. The commission is asked to review the docketing proposal below and offer guidance prior to staff crafting code amendments and related materials to implement it. Any code amendments will be subject to a Planning Commission hearing and recommendation as well as a City Council hearing and decision.

### **Background**

City Council direction. On February 15, 2010, the City Council approved a Five-Year Planning Strategy. Among other things, it called for the establishment of a docketing process to set the Planning Department's work program. On January 18, 2011 the City Council discussed the docketing proposal below, indicated their conceptual support, and directed staff to proceed with implementation.

Current process for initiating plan and code amendments and historic projects. The Community Development Code (CDC), Section 98.030A, allows legislative projects, such as code and comprehensive plan amendments, to be initiated by City Council, Planning Commission, Planning Director and neighborhood associations. In addition, citizens may petition the Planning Commission or Council to consider such projects. The former Historic Resource Advisory Board started projects and sought grants, often involving a local match, as desired, without formal Council approval or budget allocation.

### **Docketing Proposal**

The docketing process described below is intended to provide a procedure for the Planning Commission, Historic Review Board, City staff, community members and other interested people to suggest planning and historic related projects to the City Council and to become aware of proposals under consideration. The City Council would review all of the proposed projects, add projects of interest, and decide which of the proposed projects to include in the Planning Department work program. This process would allow Council to review all of the projects together and decide which ones are of greatest importance and community benefit. It also gives the Council the ability to align planning efforts to further Council goals rather than the Planning Commission and Planning Director potentially proceeding in different directions or working on projects that the Council will not ultimately support.

The docket would be set biannually in coordination with the budget, with an annual review. The proposed docketing process is as follows:

- A. Solicit ideas from the community. Staff would produce a form that would enable community members to suggest code and plan amendments and other planning and historic related projects and explain the rationale. The form would be posted on the City website and made available at City Hall. It could also be sent to neighborhood associations and others interested in planning and historic matters.

The public could submit their project ideas at any time, but there would be an annual deadline (e.g., mid-October) for projects to be considered during the next docket review.

- B. Compile a preliminary project list. In late October and November of each year, staff would compile a list of potential planning/historic projects that may include:
- projects suggested by the public;
  - projects to address issues brought to light through administration of the code;
  - projects to address issues or opportunities raised by the Planning Commission or the Historic Review Board over the course of the year;
  - ongoing projects; and
  - projects to respond to changes in State and Metro regulations or case law.
- C. Planning Commission and Historic Review Board review proposals and identify priorities. In December of each year, staff would present the suggested list of planning/historic projects to the Planning Commission and Historic Review Board to give them the opportunity to add projects of interest to them and to prioritize the proposed projects within their purview.
- D. City Council reviews the proposals and sets the docket. In January or February of each odd numbered year, the City Council would set the docket, in coordination with the biannual budget. In even numbered years, the Council would review the docket in light of new project ideas and make changes if warranted. The process at the Council level would generally occur as follows:
- Staff would present the proposed projects, along with the Planning Commission and Historic Review Board priorities, to the Council for their consideration. Staff would also provide a brief analysis of each project and a rough estimate of the staff time and, if relevant, funds needed to complete the project.
  - The Council would add to, delete, or amend the proposals as desired. Then the Council would, with consideration of staffs' capacity, decide which projects to include on the two-year docket. Upon Council approval, the docket would form the long-range work program for the Planning Department, Planning Commission and Historic Review Board. The projects on the docket would be referred to staff, the Planning Commission, or Historic Review Board for analysis, public hearing, and a recommendation per the usual process.
  - In the subsequent annual review, the Council could amend the docket to reflect current priorities or address emerging issues.
  - The Council would retain the ability to start new projects at any time as necessary to respond to urgent situations.

Associated code amendments. Two code amendments are needed to implement the docketing process. They include amending CDC Section 98.030A to eliminate the authority of the Planning Director,

Planning Commission, and neighborhood associations to initiate projects independently and replace it with a docketing procedure.

Second, CDC Section 98.030B would be amended to eliminate the requirement that legislative proposals be heard by the Planning Commission within 60 days of project initiation unless the Council authorizes a longer time period.