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# COMMITTEE FOR CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT MEETING NOTES

Tuesday, January 30, 2018

5:30 p.m. - Meeting – Rosemont Conference Room

Present: Emily Smith, Russ Axelrod, Ken Pryor, Gary Walvatne and Ramiah Ramasubramanian.

Citizens Present: David Baker

Staff Present: Jennifer Arnold

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## 1) Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 5:48p.m. **Member Axelrod made a motion to defer the approval of December 19, 2017 until next meeting and to approve the January 9, 2018 and January 23, 2018 meeting notes; seconded by Member Walvatne. Motion passed unanimously.**

## 2) Election of Chair and Vice Chair

After a short discussion on the background of annual election of officers, **Member Axelrod made a motion to defer the Election of Chair and Vice Chair until next meeting to allow for more input; seconded by Member Smith. Motion passed unanimously.**

## 3) Citizen Comments

David Baker Rosemont Summit NA attended to provide comments on a project outreach meeting. He noted his NA supports change that provide for early feedback opportunities in the land use process. Their NA has had informative meetings with development project team. The NA meetings supported a process that continued development project outreach with the NA's and they felt the process was informative. The NA was provided an opportunity to be better educated on the projects, had time to evaluate the issue and was able to get questions answered. They felt the meeting was productive, people were heard and the process encouraged participation. He felt it was productive for the applicant as it provided information they may not have known. He hoped that process would be formalized to allow for more feedback.

## 4) Continued from January 23, 2018 meeting - Planning Process: Continuation of Problem Identification & Topic Review

Chair Smith summarized the work tasks assignment from the last meeting and asked if members have reviewed documents from Member Martin (Land Use Process Review) and Member Walvatne (Cost and

Complexity of Application). Member Axelrod noted a contact he had with Member Martin that related the priority of this review should consider what issues exist, if any, from our review of the land use process that might not be addressed in this document. He noted that members should submit edits to staff for distribution to the membership. Member Walvatne discussed the goal of avoiding an electronic meeting by sending comments to staff. There was a short discussion of the public meeting law and suggested problems would be avoided by addressing comments to Staff Member Boyd. All concurred.

Chair Smith noted at the last meeting the group had discussed the land use process memo. Member Ramasubramanian suggested that the document identifies six problem areas. He thought a table would be helpful to keep continuity in the document. The structure provides clarity on the six problem areas and proposed solutions and provides a focus for the group discussion. The Committee concurred with a clarification that not all listed problem statements will have a potential solution. Member Walvatne noted the working document had not been updated with all the comments. The committee thought starting with a fresh draft, such as a new version number would be a helpful review draft. Member Axelrod volunteered to incorporate Member Walvatne changes and to provide his own proposed edits to the draft. The Committee noted the purpose of the review should not focus on a final version of the text, instead efforts should focus on the big picture and consider what items might be missing. The deadline to complete this work task would be prior to the next meeting. Each member could provide comments in advance or be prepared to discuss the material at the February 6, 2018 meeting. The goal is to have a fresh draft by the February 13, 2018 meeting. Once reviewed, the final draft could be presented to City Council potentially at their first meeting in March 2018.

In addition, Member Axelrod asked the Committee to consider potential members for a new working group. Potential members should include names from the development community and business community. At the next meetings, the committee will discuss any member names and the process for consideration. There was a short discussion on bylaws and the process to form a working group.

Member Pryor mentioned our recent meeting notes, discussed pre-application meetings during the land use process review. He asked about the rationale behind the pre-application meeting. His perception of this meeting regarded it was too focused on the applicant. His concern was the process should be changed to better engage citizens. He noted as the meeting are now held; citizens are an afterthought. He thought the land use process review should be changed to clarify this issue as a problem. Citizens must have access into the early stages of the process. The Committee noted that previous discussions have addressed this issue. Member Walvatne related the fees the applicant pays to have technical staff available to respond to questions and code issues. That is the focus of the meeting; the applicant has paid a fee to have staff available to respond to technical questions.

The concern discussed is the intent of the meeting. Is it a technical discussion for the applicant or should it provide a public forum. The committee has previously discussed continuing the meeting with a public access after the technical forum to provide opportunities for the public to learn and give feedback. Member Axelrod noted the need to update the guidelines for citizen or NA representatives when providing feedback at these meetings. Member Ramasubramanian noted to enhance citizen communication he supported an open format for discussion. He thought the payment of the fee should not preclude the ability of citizens from participating in the process. Member Walvatne discussed the difference between the pre-application meeting cost and the application cost. The pre-application fee is intended to provide staff time to discuss that process, not offset the application review.

The Committee discussed how to weigh the applicant's need to gather information in preparing their application versus the citizen's interest in becoming informed in the project and evaluating the potential impacts. Member Smith noted in prior meetings the discussion expanded to review not only the cost of the fee but the cost in hiring consultants to attend the meeting and the importance of them having time with

city staff to review technical issues. Member Ramasubramanian thought an explanation should be made available to the public so there were no misunderstandings on the purpose of the meeting. Member Walvatne noted that there is a “how to testify” hand out that could be updated. All agreed this would be a good item for discussion at upcoming meetings. Having a better explanation on what the citizen’s role is in the pre-application process should be the focus for future meetings. The committee considered starting pre-application meetings by allowing the citizens to speak or provide written information to the developer. If the intent is to improve citizen engagement, Member Pryor noted there are many areas that need improvement. All agreed there can be improvements while respecting the need for the developer to obtain the information they paid for. The consensus appeared to focus on extending the time period for the meeting to allow time for citizens to speak; at the beginning or at the end of the meeting. Member Axelrod thought providing pamphlets on the process to educate the public. He also agreed the process could be improved by providing time after the meeting to allow the public time to ask questions on the project impacts. Member Pryor supported the opportunity to attend meetings, retain the concept of two neighborhood meetings and improving the quality of the application toward the goal of reducing a contentious land use process.

Chair Smith assured that members had an opportunity to speak on the agenda item and returned to Agenda Item 3, citizen comments.

## 5) Member Comments

Member Smith referred to a letter she submitted prior to the meeting. She hoped to have a dialogue with the committee on the use of words. The first example was to replace the use of “citizen” with “resident.” Not all people reside in the community, are citizens and some may be qualified green card residents. She noted the goal was to be inclusive. The second item related to the citizen comments agenda item; she thought it should be renamed “public comments”. All people should have the right to comment whether they are citizens that live here or not. Member Axelrod noted the City Council takes similar path and the public is invited to comment. He supported that change to the agenda item title. He asked for clarification one of the issues words: resident. The City meets state law requirements for citizen involvement. Member Smith noted she wanted to have a dialogue to get more information across to the public. Member Ramasubramanian noted the topic has a very legal approach when the purpose of the CCI was to outreach to a larger audience. He understood the path she suggested was for the public to become involved, he did not think the word was an impediment to providing feedback. He did not have a problem with public comment, but the change for residency was a greater concern.

There was a discussion on citizen, from a legal perspective, from a general definition and from the social impact. The discussion ended with a recognition of the mission of the CCI to improve understanding from the land use prospective, not address the narrow legal aspect. She noted a third item that related to meeting protocol. How members are appointed, when guests speak and the confusion created on the committee when running a meeting, if a process is not followed. The overall goal was to use words and terms correctly that respect we are all citizens. In this instance, using the term public, for public comments would resolve the agenda issue.

**Member Axelrod moved to defer discussion on the proposals to the next meeting; Member Walvatne seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

## 6) Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 6:50. The next meeting is February 6, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. and will be held in the Rosemont Room located in City Hall.