Applicant's Guide to Pre-Application Public Consultation

Background:

Appendix B of PL-23-20

As part of the process for Official Plan Amendments, Zoning Bylaw amendments and plans of subdivision, applicants must conduct an independent consultation meeting with surrounding property owners, tenants and the Ward Councillor. As stipulated in the preconsultation agreement, this meeting must be held prior to the submission of a complete application under the Planning Act. It is the applicant's responsibility to summarize the feedback received at the Pre-application Public Consultation Meeting in their Planning Justification Report and discuss how this public consultation has influenced the development proposal. The meeting is to be held at the applicant's expense including costs of display materials, mailing and venue rental.

A properly conducted Pre-Application Public Consultation Meeting will provide a forum to:

- Explain the planning process and how the public can be involved;
- Describe a proposed development and show draft site plans or renderings to illustrate the project;
- Involve the Ward Councillor early in the Planning process;
- Answer questions about the proposal and dispel any rumours; and
- Gather useful public input, which may lead to early modifications and improvements to the project and facilitate the streamlined processing of the application.

These guidelines are to be used to ensure that effective, informative meetings are held to support the applicant, the Ward Councillor, the community and the planning process at large.

How should I invite property residents to the pre-application public consultation meeting?

The City of Burlington will create the list of mailing addresses for property owners and residents in the notification area, based on a circulation distance of 120 metres from the proposed development site in the urban area and 300 metres in the rural area and North Aldershot. The mailing list will also include the Ward Councillor and Community Planning Staff. It will also be appropriate and useful to invite your technical experts to attend the meeting and answer questions.

The applicant must provide the City with a PDF copy of the invitation and the City will complete the mail-out in specialized envelopes. The City will provide an invoice to the applicant for the cost of the mail-out including printing and postage. Invitations must be sent out a minimum of 10 days before the meeting and should be provided to the City a minimum of three weeks prior to the meeting.

The invitations should contain the following information:

- Who is holding the meeting;
- The purpose of the meeting, example: to discuss proposed rezoning of 1234 Any Street;
- Where the meeting will be held - address and further directions if necessary;
- The time of the meeting including day of the week, date, start and end times, as well as the time at which an overview presentation will take place;
- Why the request is being made, example: To obtain community feedback prior to the submission of rezoning application to allow a new retail store.
- Please ensure that you include a concept plan or other illustrations showing siting and possible elevations for the development on the invitation.

Where should my pre-application public consultation meeting be held?

The pre-application public consultation meeting should be held at a neutral venue in close proximity to the subject property that is suitable for all weather conditions. Civic buildings such as libraries, community centers, public or private schools are good choices, as residents will consider these a neutral venue. Please also ensure that the room is wheelchair accessible. Typically, a minimum of 50 residents should be expected.

Please ensure that appropriate audio visual resources are provided and in good working order. Ensure that there is a projector and table, screen and the appropriate cords. Staff recommend that a microphone and speaker be used for the presentation and question and answer period.

When should my pre-application consultation meeting be held?

Please contact the Ward Councillor , the Mayor and Community Planning staff to determine available dates in their calendars. Once a date is confirmed they will block off the date in their calendars. Please also take into consideration recognized holidays and school vacations when you are selecting a meeting date, as interested residents may not be able to attend due to conflicting schedules.

The appropriate time of day for the meeting should also be considered. If many of the surrounding land uses look to be residential which would likely work most of the day, then evening times are typically preferred. If mostly businesses, then daytime may work best. Allow a minimum of 90 minutes for the meeting.

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What should happen at my pre-application public consultation meeting?

This is your opportunity to tell the surrounding residents about your proposal in a professional manner. Copies of the site plan, charts illustrating proposed changes to the existing zoning regulations, renderings, air photos and other display materials are useful to illustrate the proposed development. Comment sheets should also be provided. Sign-in sheets are optional and you should ensure that personal information is kept in a secure place.

In addition to display materials, a formal presentation must take place and opportunity be provided for a question and answer session during the meeting. Community Planning staff will provide background information about the development application review process and how the public can get involved. The time of the presentation should be identified in the meeting notice, so that all attendees have the opportunity to hear questions and concerns that are raised along with your responses. Be sure your experts are on hand to respond to the questions and that you have someone taking detailed notes.

Please provide an opportunity for the Ward Councillor to get involved in the meeting. Discuss their role in advance, which could include making introductions, or moderating the Q&A session.

Setting up for a Pre-Application Public Consultation Meeting

1. The meeting room should be booked at least 30 minutes prior to the meeting to allow time for set up. Expect some residents to be early.
2. Directional signs for the meeting should be hung on the external doors and in the corridors.
3. Prepare a table at the entrance to the room with your contact information, pens, a pile of blank comment sheets and a box to put completed comment sheets into.
4. Display materials and boards should be placed near the entrance to the room, so that neighbours can view them before taking a seat. Technical experts should mingle with the public at this point and informally answer questions.
5. Rows of seating should be set up facing the screen (or blank wall) for the main presentation. Generally 50 chairs are sufficient, gauge the level of interest in your proposal and prepare accordingly.
6. A copy of the agenda should be placed in a prominent place, for example on a flip chart or projected onto the screen.

What happens if my meeting is not well attended or nobody shows up at all?

You must provide a reasonable opportunity to meet with surrounding neighbours. Attendance will depend on several factors ranging from residents with no concerns to residents with conflicts in their individual schedules. This required pre-application consultation meeting is not expected to accommodate every affected resident's personal schedule.

Sample Pre-application Public Consultation Meeting Agenda

6:30 – 7:00 p.m.	**Open House** (informal review of display materials)
7:00 –7:05 p.m.	**Welcome and Introductions** (welcome participants, introduce the Ward Councillor, Mayor, City staff, any technical experts present, and briefly review the agenda) This role should be given to the Ward Councillor.
7:05 –7:10 p.m	**Citizen Guide to the Planning Process** (Planning staff will advise that no formal application has been submitted and no decisions have been made. They will give an overview of the planning process and how the public will be involved)
7:10 –7:20p.m	**Project Overview** (You will provide a description of the proposed project with appropriate presentation materials, and discuss any technical study results which may be of particular interest to the audience)
7:20 –8:30 p.m.	**Question and Answer Period** (Be sure to have someone to take notes)
8:30 –8:35 p.m	**Wrap Up & Next Steps** (Thank those in attendance and discuss the next steps/timing of submission of the application)

What should I do after the meeting?

Organize and type up the meeting minutes. Consider the feedback received and how the proposed development might be adjusted to respond to this feedback. Include a public consultation section in the Planning Justification Report which provides information about the notification process, date and location of the meeting, a summary of the discussion, and how the public feedback was used to refine the development proposal.