

Planning Commissioner Workshop

APACA Northern California Section

March 23, 2013

Roles & Responsibilities

- Policy Makers
- Planning Commission
- Staff
- Public

Policy Maker Roles

- Sets Policy
- Decides legislative actions
- Appeal Body
- Establishes General Procedures
- Appoints the Planning Commission
- Balances relationships between Planning Commission, staff and the public
- Political Perspective

Why a Planning Commission?

- Citizen involvement
- Smaller is better
- Balance interests
- Public trust
- Orderly growth
- Consensus builders
- Lightning Rod
- Training ground

Planning Commissioner Roles

- Assess, compare & evaluates staff reports
- Acts on planning & development projects with findings
- Makes recommendations to governing body on legislative actions
- Hears appeals
- Special review of CIPs, land acquisition/disposal & special studies
- Acts in a fair, ethical, consistent manner
- Respect

Planning Commission Roles

- Educates
- Duties vary based on jurisdiction
- Listen
- Future view
 - Who are you planning for?
 - Are community needs being met?
 - Big picture vs Development project
- Balance relationship between staff and public
- Broad Community Perspective

Staff Role

- Guides and coordinates complete review of projects
- Provides information & staff reports including professional analysis & recommendations
- Identifies relevant local policies, state & federal laws
- Interprets
- Educates
- Monitors
- Acts in a fair, ethical & consistent manner
- Technical Policy Perspective

Public Role

- Engage
- Evaluate
- Become informed on issues and process
- Present local knowledge
- Focus on issues
- Use process to find solutions
- Respect
- Local community/neighborhood perspective

How Policy Makers Can Help Planning Commission?

- Meet with Commission annually
- Require Commission to have Rules & Regulations
- Encourage commission to ask for direction if a policy question or inconsistency arises
- Provide training opportunities
- Stay focus on policy and let Commission sort out the details
- Meet regularly with Commission

How Planning Commission can help staff and be successful?

- Prepare well for commission meetings
 - Read and understand staff reports
- Ask questions before meeting – don't surprise staff – allows time to research answer
- Expect good staff work and recommendations
- Staff is not the enemy , respect their role even if you don't agree with recommendations
- Understand positions and opinions of others
- If policy isn't working- change it, don't try and adapt – this usually will get you in trouble/separate issue from individual project
- Be civil to each other –set an example
- Be prepared to act
- Strive for consistency but acknowledge unique situations
- Be clear with the public

How to Help the Public?

- Inform
- Educate
- Facilitate
- Listen
- Explain Process
 - Handouts
 - Videos

More Information

- Still interested in Planning issues ?
 - Northern Section American Planning Association – Additional Planning Commission Training Courses
 - Visit web pages
 - Institute for Local Government - www.ca-ilg.org
 - American Planning Association – www.planning.org
 - California Chapter American Planning Association – www.calapa.gov
 - California Planning Roundtable – www.cproundtable.org
 - SACOG – www.sacog.org
 - Sacramento Valley Section APA – www.sacvalley-apa.org
 - Local Government Commission – www.lgc.org