

Citizen Planning Advisory Committees

I. Purpose of Statewide Planning Goal 1

Citizen Planning Advisory committees are a valuable tool in maintaining an active citizen interest in the land use process. Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 1 (OAR 660-015-000(1)) requires each county and city in the state of Oregon:

To develop a citizen involvement program that insures the opportunity for citizen to be involved in all phases of the planning process.

In Tillamook County, the Planning Commission was established as the Committee for Citizen Involvement prior to the establishment of five (5) citizen advisory committees. These 5 committees were to assist in the development of the Tillamook County Comprehensive Plan. The committees were formed based upon geographic location.

Requests have been made to the Department to initiate the formation of additional CPAC's, specifically in Pacific City and Neahkahnie. At this juncture, only one officially recognized advisory committee is in existence- the Oceanside Neighborhood Association (ONA). The ONA was not established as one of the 5 geographically designated citizen advisory committees; rather through the community plan process, it was established to be advisory on Oceanside land use issues. The communities of Neskowin and Pacific City also have provisions in their community plans guiding the establishment of advisory committees for their communities.

After reviewing the historical make-up and the current designation of 12 communities within the County, Staff determined that advisory committees could be formed at the unincorporated community level for all 12 communities if adequate interest was shown. The Planning Commission was polled on this approach and a focus group was formed with three planning commissioners, one staff person and the Director of the Department of Community Development. The intent of this document is to provide guidance in the establishment of CPAC's including their mission, roles, and responsibilities.

The focus group convened twice and arrived at the following conclusions to initiate the formation of new CPAC's within the County. They addressed the organizational format, areas of representation, mission and objective, breadth of interest, liaison role and role of CPAC.

Staff will hold public workshops in each of these communities to determine the level of interest. The workshops will be noticed and advertised in the local media. In order for a CPAC to be established for a community, there will need to be a substantial show of interest at the local level due to the time commitments expected from Staff and the Planning Commissioners.

II. Establishment of CPACs

A. Mission Statement

The CPAC will provide for and foster greater communication between the Board of County Commissioners, the Planning Commission, and the citizens within the community. The CPAC can effectively represent local needs and concerns to County decision-makers. The CPAC can disseminate information to the local citizens to assist in their understanding of complex planning issues. The CPAC can communicate and coordinate its activities with local interests as necessary to facilitate effective citizen participation in the County's land use planning process.

B. Organizational Format

The CPAC would be an officially recognized body by the Tillamook County Board of Commissioners with adopted bylaws. Certain elements within the bylaws may be altered to fit a specific need of the community. Open meeting laws would apply to all CPACs.

Any interested citizen would have the opportunity to participate on the CPAC. Each CPAC would have a board elected from the body of participants. A Board would consist of a:

- 1) chair,
- 2) vice-chair,
- 3) secretary, and
- 4) treasurer (if necessary).

A steering committee would be created for each CPAC. The steering committee would consist of the elected board and 1-2 at-large members (based on geographic diversity within the community or some other agreed upon criteria). The steering committee would set the meeting agenda. The steering committee would also be responsible for providing comments to the Planning Commission in the event a full membership meeting could not be convened due to time constraints. Any comments or recommendations made by the Steering Committee would be referred to the membership of the CPAC at the following meeting for their review and any necessary actions.

All members may vote. Issues raised include concerns that a particularly emotional land use issue could bring out unusually high numbers of local citizens who had not previously been involved in the committee. The simplest way to address this issue is:

- 1) Clearly identify the number of people in attendance,
- 2) State the number of people voting aye, nay, or abstaining
- 3) Provide within the bylaws a provision to attach a minority opinion to the recommendation to be submitted to the Planning Commission.

The roles of the executive board and membership will be described in the bylaws.

Funding for the CPACs may come from donations or from the Department of Community Development. CPACs are not allowed to charge membership dues.

Another component to citizen involvement would be the creation of another committee, similar to the Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI). This type of committee is comprised of a representative from each CPAC. The purpose of the CCI would be to address more global issues in the County as opposed to the local issues of individual CPACs. An example would be:

CPAC: conditional use
CCI: county stormwater management plan

It also allows an opportunity for CPAC leaders to discuss their issues, organizational or approach-oriented, with individuals experiencing the same challenging experiences.

C. Area of Representation

Opportunities will be given to all unincorporated communities. These include:

- 1) Barview/Watseco/Twin Rocks
- 2) Oceanside
- 3) Netarts
- 4) Neskowin
- 5) Pacific City/Woods
- 6) Hebo
- 7) Cloverdale
- 8) Beaver
- 9) Mohler
- 10) Siskeyville
- 11) Neahkahnie
- 12) Idaville

Each CPAC will have a pre-determined area of influence. The area should extend beyond the community boundaries to encompass those areas on which land use issues may have an impact. If CPAC boundaries overlap, the Planning Commission may weight the recommendations from the CPACs.

D. Review Process

- 1) Notice:

- a) Send notices of all decisions to the chair of the affected CPAC or the chair's designee;
 - b) Send notices of all relevant Planning Commission issues to the chair or the chair's designee;
 - c) Upon determination of completeness for applications within the area of the affected CPAC, notices for land use decisions requiring pre-notice would be sent to the chair or the chair's designee.
- 2) Issues may be brought before the entire CPAC and/or before a steering committee.
 - 3) Recommendations may be made to Planning Commission and/or Board of Commissioners.
 - 4) Each recommendation will be accompanied with documentation identifying the number of individuals present at the meeting and the number voting aye, nay, or abstaining. If it is written into the bylaws, the provision for a minority opinion may be put into any motion and explained.
 - 5) During public testimony, a mechanism should be in place to allow for more time on the agenda for the CPAC's. For example, if we currently allow 3 minutes for an individual, we would allow 5 minutes for the CPAC. This is also a way to honor their work.
 - 6) The Chair or the chair's designee shall be the recognized representative for the CPAC at a public hearing. There will only be one individual presenting the recommendations from the CPAC to the hearings body. Other members of the CPAC may speak as private citizens and may offer testimony that supports or opposes the recommendation.
 - 7) Providing recommendations to the Planning Commission as a single voice allows for a more effective hearing by reducing duplicative testimony and identifying those land use issues which have a community wide impact.

E. Roles of Planning Commissioners

The Planning Commissioners may choose to act as a liaison to a CPAC. The role of the commissioner is limited to:

- 1) observer (non-participatory in the discussion)
- 2) may provide factual information regarding the actual process for a land use hearing and the criteria

The role of the commissioner is not to validate a particular recommendation or to provide the commissioner's opinion on a particular issue.

The benefits of having Planning Commission participation is:

- 1) an understanding of community interests
- 2) validation of the CPAC

It is important that the commissioner is cognizant of his/her role and pay special heed to ex parte contact and bias.

F. Role of Staff

The CPACs will require staff support particularly during their establishment. Staff will assist in the formation of the CPAC and its bylaws. Staff will provide workshops on the Statewide Planning Goals, the Tillamook County Comprehensive Plan and implementing land use ordinances, to clarify the responsibilities of the CPAC, and how to provide effective guidance to the Planning Commission/Board of Commissioners. Staff may provide initial support in mailings, the creation of a website, and other infrastructure components to the CPAC. Support may also be provided to the CPAC through external sources such as the OSU Extension Service and other contracted entities.

III. Summary

CPAC's offer local citizens an opportunity to interact with their neighbors on local land use issues that impact their surrounding environment. CPACs are a valuable tool for decision-makers in formulating policies and laws. The challenge in creating and sustaining an effective CPAC is maintaining an active and involved citizen base. In doing so, communities will be developing leaders, educating and engaging citizens in land use processes and providing an enhanced voice for their concerns in an informed and effective manner resulting in desirable and livable communities.