



Legislation Text

File #: 19-1358, Version: 1

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 7, 2018

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of Scheduling a July 2019 Public Hearing Meeting.

ISSUE: Should the City Council include a summer public hearing in its 2019 docket calendar?

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council include an early summer public hearing on its schedule for Tuesday, July 9, 2019.

BACKGROUND: Vice Mayor Wilson and Council Members Bailey, Chapman, Lovain and Smedberg sent the attached September 11, 2018 memorandum to the Mayor and City Council requesting the City Manager to propose appropriate timing for an additional public hearing for both the Planning Commission and City Council in summer 2019 (Attachment 1).

Currently, the Planning Commission's docket season extends from September through July, resulting in a monthly public hearing in 11 of the 12 calendar months. Often there are no, or few, docket items for the Planning Commission in July because most case types require both Planning Commission and City Council approval. Since there is no City Council hearing in July, most applicants must wait until September. Last year, the Planning Commission cancelled its July public hearing due to a lack of cases for that month. However, for the past four years, the Planning Commission has held two June meetings due to heavy June dockets. The Planning and Zoning Department has been able to schedule the two June meeting over the past four years in a manner that coincides with coordination of the June City Council public hearing docket; otherwise, some June cases would have had to wait to September to be heard by the City Council.

DISCUSSION: The Department of Planning and Zoning and the Planning Commission have reviewed the September 11 memorandum and agree that a City Council July public hearing would be advantageous for applicants and the community. It would narrow the window when hearings are not scheduled (allowing proposals to stay on track) and would likely reduce the volume of cases in June and September.

Accordingly, as requested in the September 11 memorandum, staff reviewed the scheduling options and is recommending Option 1 of the options which are depicted in the attached chart, based on the 2019 calendar, and summarized as follows:

- (1) **Option 1** - Planning Commission Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 25th and City Council Public Hearing on Tuesday, July 9th.
- (2) **Option 2** - Planning Commission Public Hearing on Tuesday, July 2nd and City Council Public Hearing on Saturday, July 13th.

(3) Option 3 - Planning Commission Public Hearing on Thursday, July 11th and City Council Public Hearing on Tuesday, July 23rd.

Staff view Option 1 as the recommended option because, unlike Option 2, neither the Planning Commission's or the City Council's public hearing would fall within the week of July 4th when staff and residents are generally on holiday. Option 1 does not entail a Saturday public hearing held in the early part of the summer vacation season. Likewise, Option 1 is also seen as preferable to Option 3 since Option 3 would also place the timing further into the summer vacation season and, thus, impact the community, applicants, and staff who may be endeavoring to take a summer break. The Planning Commission reviewed the options for its public hearing and agree that Option 1 is preferable.

While Saturday public hearings are the norm, in this case (Option 1) a Tuesday public hearing is recommended. A Tuesday hearing achieves the goal of a July hearing, but does not impinge on a weekend which is when many (residents, staff and applicants) start their vacations.

Staff intends to solve what could have been a negative consequence of a relatively early July hearing. Even though the proposed "July" Planning Commission public hearing date is one week earlier than normal (June 25 instead of July 2), staff can keep the later submission deadline for applicants so that they will not have to submit their applications a week earlier than normal.

A change to the City Code is not required in order to hold a meeting in July because the City Charter and the City Code both indicate meetings are required every month other than July and August but meetings in those months are not specifically prohibited.

FISCAL IMPACT: Because the volume of cases is not expected to change as a result of this calendar change, fiscal impact is limited to the administrative costs of one additional public hearing.

ATTACHMENTS:

- (1) September 1, 2018 Memorandum to City Council titled "Additional Public Hearing"
- (2) Planning and Zoning Department Proposed Options for Planning Commission and City Council Public Hearing Summer Public Hearings

STAFF:

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