Randy Wingfield

From: Randy Wingfield
Sent: Tuesday, October 18, 2011 5:57 PM
To: PlanningCommission; Bradford Stipes; Cord Hall; Henry Showalter; Jim VanHoozier; Mike Barber; Richard Ballengee; Steve Huppert
Cc: Barry Helms; Nichole Hair; Becky Wilburn
Subject: Joint Public Hearing Costs
Attachments: Joint Public Hearing Costs.xlsx

At their last meeting, the Planning Commission decided to continue with the idea of moving forward with separate public hearings to be implemented beginning in January 2012. This will add approximately a month to the process. The Planning Commission realizes that there are advantages and disadvantages to both methods but like the idea of the public being given two opportunities to speak.

The Planning Commission is of the consensus that it would be best to have the Planning Commission recommendation at the Town Council public hearing, which would necessitate separate legal ads (typically around $100 for a single request – this is reduced if multiple requests are advertised together) and separate letters to adjoining property owners (with the certified/return receipt letter cost being $5.59 plus envelopes, paper, copier wear and tear, and staff time – so I would guess actually about $10.00 a letter). It has been mentioned that we can simply send the letters as certified (which is $2.85/letter), without return receipt (which is $2.30/letter), though certified/ return receipt is the method that the Town has always used as we have taken the position that it is good to have proof of both sending and delivery/attempted delivery (if a certified letter is not delivered on three tries, it is returned to the sender). Again though, the return receipt is not required and we will handle this as Council and the Planning Commission see fit.

If there is no Planning Commission recommendation at the Council public hearing (i.e. – the Planning Commission tables the request for further study), the Planning Commission would like to proceed with the Council public hearing as it would have already been advertised.

I am forwarding a table with public hearing costs for all request since Planning Commission expansion (November 2, 2010). We have averaged 25.3 letters for public hearings for CUP and rezoning requests. The mailing costs do seem to increase every year or two with Postal Service Increases. Please keep in mind that these are hard costs in the table and it does not include staff time.

The Planning Commission mentioned the possibility of having the Town record the public hearings for posting on our homepage, but seemed to think the minutes coupled with Carol's recordings would suffice. I went ahead and got an estimate from Becky just in case Council would like to consider it - $35 per hour which includes taping time plus conversion time is what the County charges (though the County likely would not be able to videotape on the second and fourth Mondays as that is when the Board of Supervisors meet). The alternative if the County is unavailable would be to hire a private firm to videotape and convert the video and Becky estimates that this would cost around $70.00 per hour. Planning Commission meetings probably average around two hours and you figure about a half hour's worth of conversion and processing so around an average of $175.00 (2.5 hours x $70.00) if you videotape the whole meeting.

The Planning Commissioner also mentioned the possibility of an audio recorder which could be purchased fairly cheaply and then uploading the audio from the public hearings. We estimate that an audio recorder could be purchased for around $50.00. There would be some Town technical support to post either video or audio, but that would be minimal.

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