

Neighborhood Meeting and Notification Policy

Based on the conversations held with the City Council regarding the neighborhood notification process and the need for neighborhood meetings prior to public hearings, staff intends to implement an administrative policy for holding such meetings and for notification procedures.

The policy moving forward is as follows:

1. A neighborhood meeting will be held if an application has been made for the following: a rezoning, land use amendment, plat or conditional use permit for a new industrial, commercial or multifamily development adjacent to or within a residential neighborhood. Multifamily development would include MDR and HDR land use designations in its definition for this purpose. This would also include churches and schools in residential areas.
2. A neighborhood meeting will be held if staff deems any application to be significant to the surrounding community no matter the nature of such application. This involves staff discretion.
3. A neighborhood meeting must be held after an application is deemed complete and prior to the public hearing at the Planning Commission. The applications will be changed to reflect this policy. Staff to take early measures to provide this message to all applicants prior to the application process starting.
4. The city will provide the applicant with addresses for the surrounding property owners within 350 feet (or greater if it is deemed necessary by staff and/or City Council) so the applicant can send out notices for the neighborhood meeting. The city will provide and/or approve a template for the meeting notice. The meeting notice shall be sent at least 7 days in advance of the meeting.
5. The applicant will be responsible for holding and leading the neighborhood meeting. Every effort should be made to hold the meeting in close proximity to the development, but at the very least, the meeting shall be held within the City of Blaine. Staff will not attend the neighborhood meetings. This gives the developer the chance to own the project and it informs the neighborhood that the city does not have ownership of the project.
6. If the applicant chooses to use meeting space designated for public use in City Hall the meeting room fees will be waived.
7. The applicant will be responsible for providing an update on the meeting by noon on the Monday immediately before the day of the Planning Commission meeting. This update will be forwarded to the Planning Commission and City Council at that time or at the meeting.

All proposed neighborhood meetings should be held virtually if possible, and if not, MDH guidelines regarding group size and social distancing must be adhered to during the COVID 19 pandemic.

As a general rule, staff will abide by the state requirement for notification of property owners within 350 of the property lines of the development. Staff will use discretion when more controversial applications are submitted to determine if the notification area should be expanded. When staff does believe the notification area needs to be expanded, they will use natural buffers or roads, etc. to determine boundaries of the notification area.