

**Processing Action Team/Permitting Review  
Site Plan Process Task Force  
Minutes of Meeting of November 21, 2006**

**Present:**

- Bill Gordy, Facilitator
- John Jacobs, Director of Public Works, City of Salisbury
- Matthew Drew, AWB Engineers
- Wes Cox, Long and Foster
- David Bates, Vista Design Group, Inc.
- Henry Hanna, Long and Foster
- Brock Parker, Parker and Associates
- John Redden, Deputy Director, Wicomico County Public Works
- Dale Pusey, Supervisory Civil Engineer, City of Salisbury
- Bob Small, State Highway Administration
- Brian Foret, Wicomico County Board of Education

**Meeting Discussion Points:**

1. Bill Gordy made opening remarks. There was a brief review of the last meeting, and the agenda for the night's meeting was discussed. John Jacobs will be discussing the City Public Works review process. If anyone has sensitive issues that need to be discussed they can be saved for after the meeting. All following meetings will be held with everyone present for all matters.
2. John Jacobs discussed the City Public Works review process. There has been a lack of communication between Public Works and the property owner. Public Works typically deals with the consulting engineer; the owner needs to be included in the process. Plans are being submitted from consultants with no changes from their last submittal. The consultants may be trying to buy time, telling the property owners that it is in Public Works hands. Property owners become frustrated because they are not being told the truth about what is holding up their project. There has been a lack of attention to detail when submitting plans. Should Public Works reject plans when repetitive comments have not been corrected?
3. Bob Small told how State Highway makes their specs available. All of their specs are available on their website. They also let the developer know that everything they need to know is online, and if they want to speed up the process, then they should get their submittals right the first time.

4. Henry Hanna asked if property owners are currently receiving a copy of the comments that Public Works makes. Dale Pusey said that property owners do receive a copy of the comments, they either are not reading them or they are not comparing them against the last set of comments they were given.
5. Bill Gordy asked if when a project comes in for second review, does Public Works only make sure the comments from last time have been corrected? John Jacobs said mostly, but things can change, like when a road gets moved it impacts other things, then those things have to be reviewed. He said the core issue is lack of communication. Should plans be rejected if things are repeatedly wrong?
6. Brian Foret asked how often consultants turn in plans with the same mistakes as their last submittal. As a property owner, he does not want to be wasting Public Works' time because he is paying good money for the engineers to be submitting corrected plans.
7. John Jacobs and Dale Pusey discussed possibly adopting new standards. Public Works has considered adopting State Highway Standards. They have been accumulating standards over time. They have considered using WSSC standards for Water and Sewer and State Highway Association standards for roads and storm drains. Brock Parker agrees that standards are needed for the design of the project. John said that certain consultants repeatedly make the same mistakes. Dale said that there may be gaps in Public Works design review process, but there is no reason for the mistakes not to be corrected.
8. Henry Hanna asked what the process is for a consultant who is going through and correcting comments. Matt Drew said that the response letter is the last thing that he does, so he can check off the list of corrections as he goes to make sure nothing was missed.
9. Brock Parker stated that the comments need to be more upfront and clearer. Public Works should eliminate all the general language at the beginning of their comments. The City should also possibly include redlines with their comments. Specific problems should be brought up to the consultant. Dale Pusey said that Public Works does not do redlines because they are not responsible for quality control. Redlining takes a very long time to do, and Public Works should not have to point out every mistake on every page. If there is a recurring comment that the consultant cannot find, he should call Public Works and speak with the engineer that made the comment.
10. David Bates asked if the Public Works engineer always looks at the plans before sending comments. He has seen some comments repeated when the issue has already been fixed.

11. Brian Foret said that many times new problems are found each time they submit. It is easier for them if the reviewing engineers make all the comments the first time they submit.
12. Brock Parker said that some engineers need to know that it's ok to overlook small things. Some comments just become nit picking. A small problem can generate up to 12 comments. Something as simple as moving a contour line is creating comments. Dale Pusey said that problems like moving contour lines and ditches are very important for the City. They need to be addressed during the design process to prevent further problems. Bill Gordy said that it seems like Public Works doesn't want to be quality control, but for some issues they do it anyway to avoid problems for themselves. Dale said that if it is an overall problem it will be generally stated in the comments. If there are just 1 or 2 instances they may be specifically indicated. Brock stated that different reviewer require different standards. Comments are not always clear, and may not be understood.
13. Brian Foret suggested creating a knowledge base of repetitive issues that come up. John Jacobs said that there is a top list of rejections for each consultant. Brock Parker suggested compiling a list of the top ten rejections for each consultant to make a rejection checklist.
14. Matt Drew said that some plans need to be rejected. Dale Pusey said that Public Works does reject plans that don't meet certain criteria. Brock Parker suggested notifying the property owner when plans are rejected. Dale said that is already being done.
15. Brian Foret suggesting implementing a pier review process before it is released to the City so issues can be addressed ahead of time. Consultants could do a self-review or have a third party review. Dale Pusey said the problem with 3<sup>rd</sup> party reviews is that they do not have as much on the line as the City does, so putting in their hands is difficult. Matt Drew suggested having the City enter the project later, after the project is close to completion, that way they would still have final approval. Bill Gordy suggested outsourcing 80% of the project to an outside engineer who uses specific city standards, and then refer it back to the City for completion. He said the consultants have to have some responsibility for their work, when is the City digging too deep?
16. Brock Parker said that the City's structure standards are available, but there needs to be a list of design guidelines to add to the City's standards. The standards should be made available online. There needs to be better communication within Public Works. All the reviewers are not the same. He recommended creating workshops to work through repetitive problems and to make sure everyone is on the same page.

17. John Jacobs said that the City may overreact on some issues. If there is going to be a policy change there needs to be some kind of transition period. He agrees that workshops should be held and design standards do need to be developed.
18. Brain Foret suggested having a “fast track” or “approved as noted” stage. This way developers can start work, knowing they will have to change any problems found in the final review. Dale Pusey will check on the ordinance for getting a grading permit/building permit before getting subdivision approval.
19. For the next meeting everyone is to go through the Development Process Action Plan (PAT) Recommendation Implementation Plan and mark anything that is not currently being done. Consultants are to make a list of complaints/compliments on the review process, and develop a list of design guidelines to add to the City standards. Public Works is to compile a list of the each consulting group’s top ten review comments to create a rejection checklist. Please email all comments to Bill Gordy so he can create a group list.
20. The next meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, November 28, 2006 at 4:00 in Room 305.