Report by the Arlington Forum on the Working Group to Consider Reforms to Arlington’s County Board Meeting Processes

December 9, 2004
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Executive Summary

Following up on one of the recommendations in the November 2003 report prepared by the Arlington Forum on civic engagement, the County Board announced on October 23, 2004, the creation of a Working Group to consider reforms to the Board’s meeting processes. The Working Group, chaired by County Board Vice-Chair Jay Fisette, was composed of ten community members who live or work in Arlington. The group met twice and also attended four focus groups facilitated by the Arlington Forum.

A number of overarching themes regarding the conduct of County Board meetings emerged from the focus groups and other interviews. The dominant theme was the need for greater predictability with regard to when particular agenda items will be heard by the Board as well as the overall length of Board meetings. The combination of unpredictability and length leads to attendees being required to invest significant amounts of time to ensure that they are present for the individual agenda items of interest to them. Presumably, many choose not to attend. Addressing this issue was widely perceived as being more respectful of people’s time and hopefully improving overall civic engagement.

The Working Group recommended a model for future County Board meetings:

- Pre-schedule 22 County Board meeting dates: 11 regularly scheduled meetings per year held on Saturday and 11 recessed meetings scheduled on Tuesday (each once per month with no meetings in August);
- Convene Saturday sessions at 8:30 a.m. with Public Comment, followed by approval of the “non-pulled” items on the Consent Agenda. The regular hearing would follow;
- Begin Tuesday sessions with Board Reports, presented either in the afternoon or immediately prior to hearing the “pulled” consent agenda items
- Begin “Pulled” Consent Agenda items at 6:30, followed by continuation of the Regular Hearing items;
- Schedule Major agenda items as the first Regular Hearing items on Saturday and on Tuesday;

The Working Group also formulated a list of general recommendations designed to facilitate the progress and accessibility of Board meetings.

Background

Civic Engagement Report

In November 2003, the Arlington Forum published its report titled “Arlington’s Changing Story: Civic Engagement in Arlington County, Virginia.” This report assessed current civic engagement practices and presented a range of recommendations for improving those practices.
A specific set of issues that were raised by community members interviewed for that report concerned County Board meetings. Some of these observations centered on the “nuts and bolts” of the manner in which the meetings are conducted:

“Business people adverted to the fact that many public meetings are on Saturday or in the evening and thus outside of their normal workday. Active citizens complained that the unpredictable nature of scheduling at County Board meetings makes it difficult for citizens to tailor their attendance to specific agenda items. A wide range of citizens also criticized the unwieldy length of County Board meetings overall. Volunteers noted that it is difficult for them to attend community meetings during normal working hours; paid staff noted that it is difficult for them to attend such meetings at night....There was also some concern that time and resource constraints can lead to a fairly narrow band of citizens being involved on a recurring basis.” (November 2003 report, p. 28)

An additional set of comments pointed to the fact that County Board meetings are only one vehicle for nurturing a strong relationship between citizens and the Board—a relationship that was widely viewed as important—and that the Board operates within a context of commissions and other advisory groups and processes that inform its policies and decisions. (November 2003 report, pp. 18-21, 30)

In response to these comments, the report recommended the establishment of “a short term collaborative working group comprised of citizens and County staff to review County processes” including the length of County Board meetings and other aspects of County processes. The identified goal was to develop recommendations to make these processes more accessible to citizens.

**Establishment of the Working Group**

**Charge**

On October 23, 2004, the County Board approved the creation of a Working Group to consider reforms to the Board meeting processes (see Appendix 1). The specific focus was to be on:

- *County Board meeting date and time*
- *County Board meeting structure* including predictability, efficiency, and overall length
- *Participation in County Board meetings*, with particular attention to the effectiveness of the Public Comment period

The Working Group was one of a number of initiatives that have been undertaken by the County in response to the report.

The Working Group was charged with providing recommendations on the identified issues to the County Board. The Arlington Forum agreed to serve as consultant
to the Working Group. The Working Group’s charge was to “build on the work of The Arlington Forum, consider the past data of their work and the experiences of neighboring jurisdictions [with] the intent of [making] these processes more accessible to citizens.”

The charge acknowledged that additional issues might surface during the Working Group’s deliberations by indicating that the County Board would have the option of extending the Working Group to consider those issues after completion of its specified tasks.

Participants

The County Board appointed ten citizens to the Working Group. (The term “citizens” is here used in the broadest sense of word—as defined in the 2003 report to include community members who live and work in Arlington.) The Working Group Chair was the current County Board Vice-Chair, Jay Fisette. The other members were:

- Gabriela Acurio, Assistant County Manager
- John Antonelli, Housing Commission Member
- Eric Dobson, Planning Commission Chair
- Rich Doud, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director
- Leni Gonzalez, Citizen-at-Large
- Peter Owen, Transportation Commission Chair
- Patrick Smaldore, Civic Federation President
- Richard Tucker, Columbia Pike Initiative Coordinator
- Eileen Williams, League of Women Voters President

Process

The Working Group held an initial meeting on November 4. At this meeting, the Working Group considered a list of issues regarding County Board meetings that had been generated by the Arlington Forum through individual conversations with Working Group members. From that list the group generated a preliminary set of goals and values for County Board meetings:

- meeting structure should be respectful of participants’ time
- meetings should be accessible to interested community members (accessibility here included a focus on day, time, location, etc.)
- the County Board should have adequate information for making decisions
- meetings should serve to inform the public
- meetings provide a forum for Board discussion

The Working Group also received detailed information about current County Board procedures as well as the conduct of meetings in neighboring jurisdictions. The Working Group then brainstormed initial ideas for addressing some of the issues raised and reviewed draft questions for the focus groups.
On November 8 and November 15, 2004, the Arlington Forum facilitated four focus groups designed to hear from key groups of citizens: County staff, citizens who regularly attend Board meetings, business representatives, and active citizens who do not routinely attend Board meetings. The members of the Working Group were present as observers but not participants at these focus groups. The focus groups were asked to reflect on the purposes of County Board meetings as well as the goals and values that had been generated by the Working Group. Focus group attendees were also asked for their concerns about the current manner in which the County Board meetings are conducted and finally for ideas about how meetings could be structured differently to meet the identified goals and values.

The Arlington Forum also conducted a number of individual interviews with key community members and officials of other governing bodies. In addition, a number of comments on the topic were received from members of the public.

The Working Group reconvened on November 29, 2004. At that meeting, the group considered the themes that had emerged from the focus groups, and identified relevant aspects of the practices of other jurisdictions. The Working Group then worked through a number of different options for structuring the County Board meetings based on the information collected.

Findings

Focus Groups

There were a number of overarching themes regarding the conduct of County Board meetings that emerged from the focus groups and additional interviews. The dominant theme was the need for greater predictability with regard to when particular agenda items will be heard by the Board as well as the overall length of Board meetings. The combination of unpredictability and length leads to attendees being required to invest significant amounts of time to ensure that they are present for the individual agenda items of interest to them. Addressing this issue was widely perceived as being more respectful of people’s time. This concern was raised with far greater frequency and emphasis than the specific time or day of Board meetings. One frequently suggested remedy to the unwieldy length of Board meetings was more restraint in terms of time used by all participants—speakers, staff, applicants, commission members, and Board Members.

Additional concerns arose in particular focus groups. The resident citizen groups raised the importance of Board meetings as a catalyst of public deliberation and community dialogue. They stressed the need for ensuring that efficiency concerns do not interfere with that function. Another observation was that Board meetings are not the only avenue for citizens communicating with the Board, emphasizing the essential nature of providing other avenues. From the business focus group came the critique that the Board’s “micromanagement” of agenda items contributes to the length of its meetings. A key concern of the staff was the current requirement that staff members be present for
consent items on Saturdays, outside of the normal workday, in case an item they have worked on is “pulled” from the Consent Agenda.

All of these themes and views from the focus groups were consistent with the findings of the 2003 civic engagement report. As with the findings of the report, there was an overall constructive attitude on the part of community members across the board. This consistency buttresses the level of confidence that may be placed in the focus group results.

**Practices of Neighboring Jurisdictions**

The Working Group also considered information about meeting practices in neighboring jurisdictions and of the Arlington School Board (See Appendix 7). Overall, Arlington’s current procedures allowed for significant public engagement relative to other jurisdictions. A number of relevant observations derived from that information:

Day of the week - Arlington is the only one of these jurisdictions that currently schedules its primary meetings on Saturdays. The City of Alexandria holds approximately one session a month on a Saturday, but its primary meetings are on Tuesday evenings. All other local jurisdictions surveyed conduct business either on weekdays or weeknights. The Arlington School Board meets on Thursday nights.

Consent Agenda - Only in Arlington and Alexandria can citizens pull items off the Consent Agenda, a prerogative that is restricted to Council or Board members or other officials in neighboring jurisdictions.

Public Comment - The District of Columbia and Montgomery County have no opportunity for public comment at meetings. Strict time limits are applied in the City of Alexandria and Prince William County. Fairfax County places public comment at the end of the agenda and limits individuals to speaking once every six months.

Another practice noted was the separation of the public hearing section of a land use item from the Board or Council’s discussion and decision. This is done in Prince William and Alexandria.

**Arlington County Board Data**

The final source of information referred to by the Working Group was information about Arlington County Board meetings. (See Appendices 2-5) Data provided by the Clerk to the County Board indicated that the current norm is 15 pre-scheduled meetings with 5-6 carryover or recessed meetings scheduled later each year. The majority of the items that attract more than 25 speakers are development projects, though major policy items can also generate a substantial number of speakers. Another subject of consideration was information regarding the kind of items pulled from the Consent Agenda (see Appendix 6).
Additional key information was that the *average* Board meeting lasts approximately 8.5 hours (carryovers included and executive sessions/lunch excluded). Another set of data reviewed was the *average* amount of time devoted to each component of the agenda (see Appendix 5). Noted specifics here were that more than half of the Public Comment period consists of Board members responding to speakers, and the average amount of time devoted to individual “big ticket” items where there were more than 25 speakers is almost 4 hours (2.5 hours for presentations and speakers and slightly less than 1.5 hours for Board discussion and decision).

**Working Group Recommendations**

*Model Board Meeting Structure and Process*

The Working Group decided at its final meeting to recommend a change to the County Board that, while not radical, will address some of the issues raised in the focus groups and other interviews conducted. The recommended model is:

The Working Group recommended a model for future County Board meetings:

- Pre-schedule 22 County Board meeting dates: 11 regularly scheduled meetings per year held on Saturday and 11 recessed meetings scheduled on Tuesday (each once per month with no meetings in August);
- Convene Saturday sessions at 8:30 a.m. with Public Comment, followed by approval of the “non-pulled” items on the Consent Agenda. The regular hearing would follow;
- Begin Tuesday sessions with Board Reports, presented either in the afternoon or immediately prior to hearing the “pulled” consent agenda items
- Begin “Pulled” Consent Agenda items at 6:30, followed by continuation of the Regular Hearing items;
- Schedule Major agenda items as the first Regular Hearing items on Saturday and on Tuesday;

The Working Group also felt strongly that Board Reports should be scheduled for the Tuesday recessed meeting. The Working Group left to the Board the decision of how to schedule the time leading up to Tuesday’s scheduled 6:30 p.m. start time, with one option being to start the session in the afternoon with Board Reports (3:30 p.m.) and adjourn for executive session and dinner break (4:30 to 6:30 p.m.), and another option being to convene the meeting at 5:30 or 6:00 p.m. with Board Reports thus eliminating the break before hearing the pulled consent items.

*This model for the Consent Agenda allows citizens and Board members to pull items off of the Consent Agenda on Saturday, to be heard at recessed meeting. It requires speakers to be present to pull items (no advance sign-up). Staff will call speakers during the period in between meetings to discuss and work out issues with hope of streamlining the hearing at the recessed session. (It was recommended that speaker slips include space for
phone numbers to allow staff to contact speakers.) Applicants and staff need not show up for Saturday’s Consent Agenda vote as the only items under consideration will be those for which there is no question or controversy. Pulled items would be heard no earlier than 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday.

Advantages of Proposed Model

- Greater predictability of most items.
- Greater predictability of meeting schedule—22 dates are prescheduled.
- Voting on non-controversial Consent items on Saturday eliminates the need for parties to be present.
- Board Reports are at a time that does not keep attendees waiting for other items.
- Public Comment, Consent and major items are at set times.
- Less administrative work preparing for Board meetings.
- Flexibility to split Board agenda between two prescheduled meetings each month.
- Consent Agenda items requiring staff or applicants presence scheduled at more convenient time.
- Opportunity for closed session prior to convening evening carryover meeting.
- Possibility of shorter meetings.

Other General Recommendations Made by the Group:

- Board Members should consider limiting responses to Public Comment speakers.
- Establish criteria for placement of items on Consent Agenda (it was suggested that the Clerk work with the County Attorney to develop criteria modeled on those already in use—see Appendix 6).
- Establish incentives for speakers to voluntarily cut down on overall speaking time (for example, civic association representatives first, followed by residents in support of civic association with lesser amounts of time; consolidation of speakers; asking speakers to limit themselves to 2 minutes if speakers exceeded a certain number; all speakers who sign up to speak for two minutes or less speak at the beginning).
- Encourage advance sign-up for regular hearing items (the Clerk would be asked to establish a process/guidelines that take into consideration the different abilities and access of residents) while continuing to provide for in-person sign-up.
- Create a guide for understanding Board meetings (an at-a-glance brochure format on speaking procedures, times, etc.).
♦ Have a liaison stationed out in the hallway during Board meetings to answer meeting process questions or help people sign up (it was pointed out that the Deputy Clerk already does this on an informal basis).

♦ Discourage verbatim reports of commission members; rather, focus on highlights, controversial or new information, and streamline reports.

♦ Consider putting Board meetings on radio.

♦ Consider enabling citizens to monitor progress of meeting by phoning a computerized County number.

♦ Standardize order of presentations for public hearing items—applicants, staff, commissions, speakers, Board discussion and action.

♦ While the recommended model would ideally provide for two “times certain” for major items (9:15 a.m. on Saturday and 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday), other agenda items should be ordered through announcements of projected “earliest start times.” These earliest start times can be indicated on the agenda with regular updates by the Chairman during the meeting.

♦ Scrolling by County Cable Channel 71 of progress on agenda items and other information.

♦ The preferred time of the Working Group for “special presentations” is Saturday mornings, although there was some sentiment that such presentations could be made during Board Reports, depending on the timing of that portion of the agenda.

Arlington Forum Comments

While the Working Group made progress in addressing the major issues raised in focus groups, individual interviews and its own deliberations, there are several issues that we believe bear some examination at this point and that can be easily addressed by the Board in determining its course of action.

The issue of the predictability of agenda items and overall meeting length was the dominant theme of this process. We believe the intent of the Working Group was to ensure “times certain” for major agenda items at 9:15 a.m. on Saturday and 7 p.m. on Tuesday. This recommendation, however, did not go far enough in addressing the importance placed on these issues by those interviewed, or even by the Working Group itself. The average times for items calculated by the Clerk to the County Board make it clear that in most instances meetings would not begin at the times discussed by the Working Group.
To ensure a minimum of two “times certain” for major agenda items, we recommend placing them at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, allowing one hour for Public Comment and consent approvals, and at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, with the “pulled” consent items scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m.

In addition,

- We recommend the Board Reports take place on Tuesday afternoon at a time to be determined by the Board and be televised for re-broadcast.
- We recommend that major agenda items be scheduled on Saturday. Tuesday sessions should adjourn by 11:00 p.m.
- We recommend that the Tuesday session be held in the week following the Saturday session.
- We recommend measures for increasing the effectiveness of Public Comment.
- We recommend further deliberation on two additional issues—changes to the development process that could render Board proceedings less onerous and consideration of the various avenues currently and potentially available other than Board meetings for citizens to interact with Board members.

**Times Certain for Major Agenda Items**

This issue, in terms of predictability of Board meetings and the length of time individual citizens needed to devote to a single meeting, was the single most frequently mentioned issue by participants in focus groups as well as individuals who were interviewed. The final Working Group recommendation assumes two “times certain” for major items: 9:15 a.m. on Saturday, following Public Comment and dispatch of consent items requiring no hearing; and 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, following hearing of consent items that have been pulled from the Saturday agenda.

We encourage the Board to shift those times somewhat to more accurately reflect the average time spent on these items. Currently, Public Comment requires on average 53 minutes (including Board response). Even allowing only five minutes for consent, this would bring the start of the first item to 9:25 a.m. We recommend that the time certain for the first item be 9:30 a.m. on Saturday.

In addition, the recommendation to hear pulled items at 6:30 p.m. at the recessed meeting, with the first Regular Hearing item to follow at 7 p.m. allows only 30 minutes for items which now average 42 (this number is based on 15 meetings per year and is likely to expand somewhat given the lower number of scheduled meetings). We suggest moving consent items to 6:00 p.m., allowing a full hour, followed by the Regular Hearing items at 7:00 p.m.

While the Working Group’s decision was based on its desire to schedule all items on which citizens would be interested in speaking during non-workday hours, we stress that the overriding concern in the focus groups was predictability and length of the Board meetings in order to make them more accessible and less onerous to citizens.
Additionally, the Working Group’s choice of 6:30 reflected a vote by the group of first and second choices and, while the 6:30 choice won the day, it was actually a reflection of more members’ second choices. As our mission is civic engagement, we would not feel confident recommending an option that would jeopardize participation, but we believe that the issues of predictability and length of Board meetings more significantly affect a greater number of citizens than would putting the start time of the Consent Agenda at 6:00 p.m.

**Board Reports**

It is our view that the Board should consider a Tuesday recessed meeting agenda which would begin Board Reports at 4:00 or 4:30 p.m., allowing for a dinner break prior to hearing consent items at 6:00 p.m. These reports should be televised and re-broadcast as is currently done, but the Board should also consider broadcasting Board Reports in a separate format given the broad interest in many of the items as indicated in the focus groups.

**Scheduling Major Agenda Items**

It is our view that major agenda items (those likely to run three-four hours) should be scheduled on Saturdays. Every attempt should be made to adjourn the Tuesday Board session by 11 p.m. This respect for people’s time (citizens, staff, applicants, Board) in the evening at the start of a working week is an important signal.

The Working Group discussed the possibility of using Wednesdays for “carryover” items from the Tuesday session. In our view, that should not be necessary if items are scheduled as we suggest, based on the time the Board is currently spending on items.

**10-day Lapse Between Meetings**

On review of the Working Group’s discussion of single Board meetings that begin on Saturday and resume on a Tuesday ten days hence, we encourage the Board to look at a model which continues the meeting on the following Tuesday. While the rationale for the 10-day lapse was the burden on staff to prepare two reports in a period of five days, we suggest that Board Reports be prepared for the entire meeting (that is, Saturday and Tuesday) as one package and that the meetings be treated as one overall despite the reality that there is one regular meeting followed by the recessed meeting.

Two reasons for this recommendation, other than the fact that the lapse between sessions that are billed as one meeting seems incongruous, relate to the flow of information from commissions and the emergence of last-minute information on agenda items. As to the first, the issue of respecting the process that leads up to Board meetings was raised by the focus groups and several Working Group members. Whether the contemplated ten-day lapse would complicate the progression of matters from commissions to the Board should be considered. As to the second, another issue that was
raised regarding Board procedure is that last-minute information is often introduced at Board meetings that seriously affects the ultimate outcome. We think that allowing ten days to elapse between sessions could exacerbate this issue.

Effectiveness of Public Comment

There was a sense in several of the focus groups that Public Comment, which is important in terms of providing a venue for citizens to raise issues of general concern, could better serve that purpose. Two suggestions toward that end we think worthy of consideration: (1) the idea of more uniform adherence to current criteria for Public Comment; and (2) establishing consistent procedures to address or follow up with issues that are raised.

Other Issues

Two other themes arose from all four focus groups that were not considered within the charge of the group but that participants believed directly affect the conduct of County Board meetings. The first was a general sense that the development process and development projects, which comprise a significant proportion of agenda items that come to the Board in a controversial posture and consume large chunks of meeting time, warrant some specific attention. The second was an overall awareness that County Board meetings are actually the final step in a very comprehensive process. Adjustments to the process that transpires leading up to the Board meetings could have beneficial effects on the meetings themselves.

We recommend further deliberation on these issues.

- Consider the various avenues currently or potentially available for the Board and the public to interact both from an information-sharing perspective and from a relationship-creating perspective. This would build on the idea that Board meetings are only one of a variety of mechanisms available for meeting this goal.

- Initiate consideration of the development process more generally to identify ways in which the process can be improved overall, with one explicit goal being less onerous Board proceedings.

In addition, while not mentioned a great number of times, the availability of child care at Board meetings was mentioned in the focus groups. We think it would be worth exploring the cost and usefulness of this in terms of accessibility.
Appendix 1

Resolution Establishing a Working Group to Consider Reforms to Arlington’s County Board Meeting Processes
October 21, 2004

Background

In the interim, several efforts have been made to follow-up on the recommendations in this report. In 2004, Chairman Favola proposed the establishment of a Civic Engagement Institute, to include a resource center, enhanced volunteer outreach, and leadership training programs. This effort is still in progress.

The County Board is interested in further exploring means to overcome barriers and expand opportunities to useful civic engagement. This proposal is an effort to respond to the additional concerns identified in the 2003 report related to County Board meeting procedures.

Issues

- **County Board meeting date and time:** What is the best day and time of the week to hold County Board meetings? Should meetings continue to be held on Saturdays or go to a weekday?

- **County Board meeting structure.** How can we provide more predictability and efficiency in the ordering of the County Board meeting agenda? How can we minimize the uncertainty of lunch breaks and the time citizens wait (up to 6 hours) for their agenda item to be heard? Can we improve the “unwieldy length” of County Board meetings?

- **Participation in County Board meetings.** How can we improve the effectiveness of the public comment period in terms of hearing from Arlington citizens?

Proposed Process
The November 2003 report recommended the establishment of a short-term collaborative Working Group, comprised of citizens and county staff, to review certain county processes. The County Board will appoint such a Working Group. This Working Group shall provide recommendations on the issues identified above to the County Board by December 3, 2004. These recommendations will be considered by the County Board at its December 11 meeting - thus allowing for implementation of some reforms for the CY 2005 County Board schedule. In consultation with the Working Group, the County Board may extend the Working Group to consider additional issues after completion of this effort.
Palma Strand and Melinda Patrician, co-founders of the Arlington Forum and authors of the November 2003 report, will serve as consultants to this effort. The consultants will attend all Working Group meetings, will facilitate four focus groups, and will draft the final report.

The Working Group will build on the work of The Arlington Forum, consider the past data of their work and the experiences of neighboring jurisdictions. The intent is to make these processes more accessible to citizens.

Composition of Working Group
The Working Group shall consist of a maximum of ten persons to include six citizens, two county staff, and one business community representative. The six citizen members shall include representatives of the League of Women Voters, Arlington County Civic Federation, Planning Commission, Transportation Commission and Housing Commission. From this pool, we will work to ensure minority, senior and young adult voices.

The Working Group shall be chaired by County Board Vice-Chair Jay Fisette.
Appendix 2

Structure of Current Board Meeting Agenda

1. Public Comment
2. County Board Reports
3. Appointments
4. Regional Reports
5. County Manager Report
6. Consent Agenda – Public Hearing Items Begin No Earlier than 9:00 A.M.
   - Site Plans/Amendments/Reviews
   - Use Permits Request/Review/Amendments
   - Vacations, Easements, Rights of Way, Encroachments & Leases
   - Ordinances and Plans
   - Appropriations, Grant Applications & Contracts
   - Request to Advertise
   - Other
7. Regular Hearing
Appendix 3

For period of **January 2003 through October 2004:**

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<td>28</td>
<td>Regular Meetings</td>
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<td>Recessed Meetings</td>
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<td>39</td>
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## Appendix 4

### SCHEDULE OF HEARINGS WITH OVER 25 SPEAKERS

*January 2003 – October 2004*

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<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TYPE OF MEETING</th>
<th># OF SPEAKERS</th>
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<th>LENGTH FROM DISCUSSION CONFINED TO VOTE</th>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Woodbury Park</td>
<td>Oct. 4, 2003</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10:03 - 12:02</td>
<td>12:02 - 1:44</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gables</td>
<td>Feb. 7, 2004</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1:12 - 4:02</td>
<td>4:02 - 5:20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing Guidelines</td>
<td>Feb. 21, 2004</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10:49 - 1:15</td>
<td>1:15 - 2:23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saul Center</td>
<td>July 14, 2004</td>
<td>Recessed</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7:12 - 9:46</td>
<td>9:46 - 10:29</td>
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<td>Clarendon Baptist Church</td>
<td>July 14, 2004</td>
<td>Recessed</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>10:30 - 12:49</td>
<td>12:49 - 1:26</td>
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**Average Time**

- Length from discussion confined to vote: 2 Hrs 29 Mins
- Length from discussion confined to vote: 1 Hr 19 Mins
## Appendix 5

**AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF AGENDA ITEMS / PUBLIC HEARINGS**  
11/17/04 (FINAL)

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<th>TYPE</th>
<th>AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME July 2003 – June 2004</th>
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<td>Public Comment</td>
<td>53 Minutes</td>
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<td>Speakers Only: 23</td>
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<td>Board Response: 30</td>
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<td>County Board Reports</td>
<td>19 Minutes</td>
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<td>Advisory Groups</td>
<td>1 Minute</td>
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<td>Regional Reports</td>
<td>14 Minutes</td>
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<td>County Manager Reports</td>
<td>15 Minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consent Agenda</td>
<td>42 Minutes</td>
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<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
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<td>Average for Non-Public Hearing Items</td>
<td>144 Minutes</td>
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<td><strong>2 Hrs 24 Mins</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Closed Meeting / Lunch</td>
<td>1 Hrs 3 Mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular Public Hearings (Only)</td>
<td>5 Hrs 2 Mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AVERAGE LENGTH OF CB MEETINGS</strong></td>
<td>8 Hrs 29 Mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6

Criteria for preparing the Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda is generally used to approve non-controversial or routine matters by a single motion and vote of the County Board. The items recommended by the County Manager for the Consent Agenda generally meet the following criteria:

- Non controversial items, for which no members of the public have expressed interest, and therefore, no speakers are expected at the County Board hearing;
- Items that do not include a major policy change which may necessitate a discussion by the County Board;
- Items which the Planning Commission and/or other Commissions agree with staff’s recommendations;
- Items recommended for approval not disputed by the community or any other affected parties;
- Items recommended for deferral not disputed by the applicant or any other affected parties;
- Items that the applicant has requested to withdraw;
- Approval of minutes;
- Requests to advertise of non-controversial items;
- Routine lease agreements;
- Routine acceptance of grants;
- Routine appropriation of funds;
- Routine contract agreements.
## Appendix 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEETING SCHEDULE</th>
<th>PUBLIC HEARING RULES</th>
<th>PUBLIC COMMENT RULES</th>
<th>CONSENT AGENDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designated Saturdays, at 8:30 a.m. (none in August)</td>
<td>♦ Up to 3 minutes of speaking time for individuals</td>
<td>♦ Regular Saturday Meetings, first item at 8:30 a.m.</td>
<td>♦ Board members and may remove items from the agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recessed meetings typically Tuesdays at 7 or 7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>♦ Up to five 5 minutes for organizations</td>
<td>♦ Up to 2 minutes of speaking time for individuals &amp; organizations</td>
<td>♦ Persons (regardless of who) may organize up to 3 minutes of speaking time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Only one speaker per organization per agenda item (enforced for 5 minute time slot only).
- Called in order in which slips received.

| Saturday following 2nd Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. (none in July or August) | ♦ Up to 3 minutes of speaking time for individuals & organizations. | ♦ Regular Saturday Meetings, first item at 9:30 a.m.: 1) Call Roll, 2) Public Discussion Period, 3) Consent Agenda, 4) Reports and Recommendations of Manager, 5) Commission reports, 6) public hearings | ♦ Council members may remove items from the agenda. |
| Typical no carry-over meetings; finish business on Saturdays by going as late as necessary | ♦ Request to speak longer must be to Clerk day before hearing | ♦ Up to 3 minutes of speaking time for individuals & organizations. | ♦ Only Council members off the Consent Agenda. |
| Legislative meetings held 2nd & 4th Tuesdays from September to June at 7:30 p.m. (for work sessions, commission reports, appointments to advisory groups, etc.) | ♦ Mayor or presiding Council member determines order of speakers | ♦ If more than 6 speakers or 30 minutes worth of testimony anticipated, Mayor organizes speaker requests by subject or position and allocates appropriate time. | ♦ Per sons may speak no more than 5 minutes. |

| Tuesday at 10 a.m. | ♦ Up to 3 minutes of speaking time for individuals | ♦ No Public Comment Period | ♦ Only Council members off the Consent Agenda. |
| & 4th Tuesdays at 7 p.m. | ♦ Up to 5 minutes for organizations | ♦ Meeting begins 7 p.m. | ♦ Only Council members off the Consent Agenda. |
| | ♦ Must sign up 15 days in advance of public hearings | ♦ "Presentations by Public": immediately before consent agenda: 1) Invocation, 2) Pledge, 3) Presentations/ Proclamations, 4) Adoption of Agenda, 5) Presentations by Public, 6) Consent Agenda, 7) Public hearings, 8) Minutes, 9) Closed Meeting, 10) Appointments, 11) Council Comments, 12) Adjournment | ♦ No more than 5 minutes of speaking time. |

- Max of up to 10 minutes during any meeting.
<table>
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<tr>
<td>2nd &amp; 4th Mondays at 7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>- Up to 3 minutes of speaking time for individuals &amp; organizations.</td>
<td>- Called &quot;Public Comments&quot;; grouped with Consent Agenda Comments &amp; Requests</td>
<td>- Only Council members can pull items off the Consent Agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Only one meeting in August and December</td>
<td>- Boards and commissions receive up to 5 minutes.</td>
<td>- Held before public hearing items: 1) Call to Order, 2) Pledge, 3) Roll Call, 4) Special Meetings Validation, 5) Proclamations, 6) Oath of Office for Commissions, 7) Public Comments, Requests, Consent Item Comments, 8) Mayor's Report, 9) Council Member Reports, 10) Public Hearings, 11) New Business, 12) Minutes</td>
<td>- Supervisors require advanced notification to pull items, but may still be pulled off the Consent Agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Held on Tuesdays when falls on Monday holiday</td>
<td>- Up to 3 minutes on items on that day's agenda items and items not on the agenda.</td>
<td>- No limitation on number of speakers.</td>
<td>- Rarely are items pulled off the Consent Agenda due to the review process 2 weeks prior to the meeting between the County Executive and Members to gain approval before items can be pulled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 1st &amp; 3rd Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>- Up to 5 minutes of speaking time for individuals &amp; organizations.</td>
<td>- Called &quot;Public Comment&quot;; meeting begins at 9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>- Only Board members, Executive, or County Attorney can pull items off of Consent Agenda.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Held before public hearings: 1) Call to Order, 2) Invocation/Pledge, 3) Resolutions or Commendations, 4) Public Comment, 5) Administrator’s Comment, 6) Board Comment, 7) Information Items, 8) Appointments, 9) Requests for Additions/Deletions to Consent Agenda, 10) Action items, 11) Committee reports, 12) Amendments, 13) Executive Session</td>
<td>- Up to 5 minutes of speaking time, but if large number of speakers, Chairman may cut back time to 3 or 2 minutes per speaker.</td>
<td>- Individuals known to members for removal from meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 1st, 2nd and 3rd Tuesdays at 2 p.m., and may reconvene at 7:30 p.m. for public hearings; land use matters heard at evening public session</td>
<td>- Up to 3 minutes of speaking time for individuals &amp; organizations.</td>
<td>- Public hearings scheduled earlier in day typically administrative type matters</td>
<td>- Consent agenda changes only 1st &amp; 3rd regular meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd meeting is for work sessions and presentations; not typically voting session.</td>
<td>- Up to 5 minutes for recognizable organizations.</td>
<td>- Recess for dinner &amp; continue public hearings 7:30 p.m. This portion for advertised hearing items, particularly land use</td>
<td>- Only Board member, Executive, or County Attorney can pull items off of Consent Agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No meetings after first Tuesday in August until first Tuesday after Labor Day in September)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Up to 3 minutes on any subject not on that day's agenda.</td>
<td>- Rarely are items pulled off the Consent Agenda due to the review process 2 weeks prior to the meeting between the County Executive and Members to gain approval before items can be pulled.</td>
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<td>- Limited to 30 minutes. Chairman allocates 30 minutes among speakers.</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each Tuesday at 9 a.m.</td>
<td>Up to 3 minutes of speaking time for individuals</td>
<td>No Public Comment Period</td>
<td>Only Council members pull items off the Consent Agenda process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees on Mondays and Thursdays</td>
<td>Up to 5 minutes for organizations</td>
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<td>Citizens may speak level process.</td>
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<td>Try to limit to 30 speakers per agenda item.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st &amp; 3rd Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.; no recessed meetings (days may be different in Sept/Oct).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Up to 3 minutes of speaking time for individuals and organizations.</td>
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<td>For large numbers of speakers, Chairman may ask individuals to limit their comments to 1 or 2 minutes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>For larger items, Chairman may ask individuals to voluntarily withdraw speaker slips and to stand up to determine numbers for or against an item.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First item at 7:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Only School Board pull items off the Consent Agenda process.</td>
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<td>Limited to 30 minutes; those not heard within that timeframe may stay to be heard at end of meeting.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Up to 3 minutes of speaking time for individuals and organizations.</td>
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<td>More than one individual may speak on same topic.</td>
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