



*Let us do the
reading for
you!*

August 29, 2025
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What's New

In land use planning

RFM Land Use Consulting

Public Participation in the Technological World pt. 3

As we began in the last couple of issues, public participation in the technological world has raised at least a couple issues on how the public can participate in the decision making process.

Now, what about the future of public participation? Will we all just be sitting in front of computers, linked through any one of the numerous group conference applications to hold meetings? Are the in-person versions no longer relevant?

These are good questions that I, at least, do not have any real good answers for.

From my perspective, I would hazard a guess as to say it would depend on the controversial nature (if one exists) on any one subject. Many years ago,

there was a subject wherein there was so many people against the project, the crowd spilled out of the Board Chambers out in to the lobby. Then, just recently, there was a mix of in person attendees and those on Zoom for a controversial ordinance being considered.

If any of you, my loyal readers, have any thoughts on the topic, I would like to hear from you!

Join me on...

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Focus on a Service – Initial Consultation

Have you ever gone in to a surgical center to have a procedure done without having first talked to a doctor? Or how about a mechanics shop and having them work on the engine without being told what might be wrong first?

I bet not.... neither have I.

When I was first setting up the business, I took in to consideration a lot of factors when it came to how the business would run and what I would charge. The one thing that stuck in my mind was: what if what the potential client has just spent the past half hour describing what they need/want done, and it turns out that

I'm the wrong person for their needs? Do I still charge them for that half hour of time just to say "sorry, can't help you"? That just seemed wrong to me.

So I came up with the idea of setting aside one hour just to hear them out, figure out what they needed done, and if I can help them, begin the contract phase. Therein began the "Initial Consultation" with no fees attached.

In most cases, I am able to help the new client, but in at least two cases what they needed was an architect or a real estate agent.

Focus on a Service (cont.)



The basic idea is for me to ask what is the overall need, and drill down to the tasks needed. Kind of like the reporters of old, the "who, what, where, when and why" type of interviews. This gives me a better picture of what's going on and what needs to be done.

In a couple cases, it turned out that while I knew what the potential client needed and that I could potentially help, all they really needed was an architect and a construction firm.

One might ask, "if you tell them what they need is someone else, won't you lose business?" Well, sure, I could. But on the flip side, if they remember that I was up front with them and didn't try to take their money for nothing, I could potentially earn a new clients down the road.

To Laugh, or Not to Laugh, that is the Joke...

If an electrician listens to music, is it AC-DC or something more current?

Why don't ants get sick? They have little Anty Bodies!

At the supermarket, I asked a worker there where the canned peaches were, he said "I'll see" and walked off...I then

asked another worker the same thing, they said "I'll see" and walked off...I gave up asking and finally found them in Aisle C....

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Yes, Planners do have a sense of humor!!



What IS the planning field anyway?

A good working definition of planning might be: the process by which local governments (typically) determine the intensity and geographical arrangements of various uses within the community. Another way to define planning might also include: the protection of the health, safety and welfare of those living in a defined area. Simply, it is the process by which society decides what gets built where.

This definition in a way is why one sees industrial functions lumped together, commercial functions lumped together, and residential functions lumped together. Deciding land use in this way came after years of everything just lumped together and issues arising from that that eventually needing to be addressed.

Even within that brief description provided, the concept of planning covers a lot of ground. In short, it's fair to say

that the planning process covers five interrelated activities: design (the layout), laws and regulations (shaping and application of state laws and local regulations), environmental analysis (assessing the impact of any give plan or development), socioeconomic impact (assessing the impact of a plan on a neighborhood's social structure, on a communities fiscal health), and political approval (winning the support of the public and elected representatives).

Unlike the thinking of some people, planning is not just the "rubber stamping" of an application when it comes in. If done properly, depending on the subject matter, the process could take a few months to a few years to go through the system. Or it may "die on the vine" for any number of reasons.



What is of interest to you, the reader...

I hope you have been enjoying these newsletters as much as I have in writing them. I've been trying to find information that may be of some interest to everyone.

Now that I've been doing this awhile, let me turn the tables on to you, my readers! Please let me know what may be of interest to you...things you may want to know, or hear about.

Additionally, if you have any announcements you may wish to pass along, or have a short piece to share, please pass it along and I'll be happy to include it in the newsletter.

As you know, I publish this once a month, so plan accordingly! If there is a special announcement though, I can easily slip it in the email blasts as a

separate and stand-alone item!

If you would like to see it explained on YouTube, now that I have a channel started, please let me know too!





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Customer Comes
First***

Publications

I hope you have enjoyed this publication of RFM Land Use Consulting's newsletter! While short in nature, I hope you have found the information useful.

It is my hope to periodically publish a newsletter to keep my clients up to date with articles relating to the planning field, as well as highlight projects I feel are of note for the community.

If there are subjects of interest in the

planning field you would like to see here, please feel free to contact me with those ideas, and I will include them in future publications.

If you know anyone wanting to subscribe to this newsletter, go to www.rfmlanduseconsulting.com, or click on the QR code below, it's free!

Thank you for reading!

Topics in future editions of the newsletter...

- Legal issues
- Planning theories
- Trends in planning
- Highlight of a service(s)
- Project highlights (both mine, and those in the Community)
- Cycles in the Planning Field
- Website
- YouTube Channel
- Brown Act (public participation)
- Other....

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