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# Working with Developers

## Six Tips for Neighborhood Organizations

Norfolk's Planning Commission considers an average of 260 applications per year pertaining to re-zoning, conditional use permits, and amendments to the City's general plan. When applications require approval by the Planning Commission and City Council, applicants are required to contact the neighborhood civic league to explain their request or to set up a separate neighborhood meeting. A five minute video is available from the City's YouTube channel, [youtube.com/norfolktv](https://www.youtube.com/norfolktv), but here are the six tips summarized.

**1**

### Meet the Planning Department.

- Visit [www.norfolk.gov/planning](http://www.norfolk.gov/planning), call (757) 664-4752, or schedule an appointment.
- They value your questions.
- A more informed public is better for everyone.

**2**

### Know the current zoning and guiding documents for your neighborhood.

- Use the Norfolk Air application - <http://norfolkair.norfolk.gov/norfolkair/Search.aspx>
- plaNorfolk 2030 is the City's general plan and is available on the planning website.
- Civic leagues can designate a member to monitor zoning activity.

**3**

### Engage your neighborhood in conversations about the future.

- It is better for a neighborhood to have a unified vision for the future than to approach development proposals with no vision or goals.
- The whole neighborhood should be involved, not just a few.

**4**

### Give Developers a fair hearing to the whole neighborhood.

- Developers should be given a timely response and an opportunity to meet with the neighborhood/civic league.
- The whole neighborhood should be invited, and good facilitation skills are beneficial.
- Neighbors should not be intimidated to make reasonable requests to developers.

**5**

### Be prepared to make your case to the Planning Commission and City Council.

- Prepare with facts, avoid personal attacks, and give a timeline of how decisions were made.
- Be engaged with the Planning Commission during the process and beyond to establish a mutual relationship.
- If possible, send representatives to hearings rather than just letters.

**6**

### Shoot for the best, but have realistic expectations.

- Developers are attracted, not forced. Earning a good reputation and neighbors taking pride in their neighborhood attract good developers.
- Build positive relationships with developers to attract the development you want.