

Having Your Say at a Planning & Environment Committee Meeting

This guide provides advice to people who have made a written submission and have requested to be notified should the matter be referred to the Planning & Environment Committee.



City of Ryde

The following is an explanation of the process if an application is to be decided by Planning & Environment Committee or Council.

How does the Planning & Environment Committee work?

About 10% of all development applications made to Council are referred to the Planning & Environment Committee.

The Planning & Environment Committee meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month to consider matters referred to it. The Planning & Environment Committee can approve or refuse an application under delegated authority, or may refer the application to a Council meeting. The Council meetings are conducted on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month.

If I object to a proposal, do I have to speak at the Committee meeting?

No – you do not have to speak unless you want to. Your written comments will be reported and considered at the meeting, along with the recommendations. Committee meetings are open to the public so, if you want, you can come along and just observe what happens.

However, you should remember that even if the officer's recommendation is in line with your views, the Committee could make a different recommendation to the view of the elected Council.

How will I be notified?

We will contact you to tell you when Committee is due to consider the application – where possible, this is done by telephone on the Thursday or Friday prior to the meeting. Please remember that **only people who have indicated before the Committee meeting that they wish to be notified of the meeting, or speak at the meeting**, will be contacted and have the opportunity to speak.

Where are the Committee meetings held?

In the committee rooms on the fifth floor of the Civic Centre located at 1 Devlin Street; the corner of Devlin Street and Blaxland Road, Ryde. There are limited public parking spaces available.

Who will be at the meeting?

The meeting is made up of a Committee of several Councillors who review the recommendations of the Council officers. The committee has a Chairperson who guides the conduct of the meeting's business. Several Council officers are also in attendance to assist with the conduct of business.

May I see the assessing officer's recommendations before the committee meeting?

Yes – the reports that are referred to the committee are available for any member of the public to read. Copies are made available at all branches of Ryde Library and Information Service from 9.30am on Saturday before the Committee meeting. The reports (as part of the agenda document) are also available on Council's website, <http://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au>, from this time.

What happens at the Committee meeting?

If there are site inspections to be made, these are normally the first matters to be dealt with – review of the relevant recommendations are handled later in the meeting when all inspections have been done.

For items where someone has requested the opportunity to speak at the meeting about a particular proposal, the following events are typical:

- The spokesperson(s) for objectors to the proposal may put their case.
- The applicant, or representative may then speak.
- Also, members of the Committee may ask the speakers questions after they have spoken.
- Members of the Committee then discuss the proposal (they sometimes ask Council officers for more information before they make their recommendations).

What are the rules for speaking at the Committee meeting?

The Chairperson needs to keep the meeting running smoothly and fairly, and the amount of time that speakers have to put their cases is limited to 5 minutes. If you are with a number of people who want to make the same point, it will help if you appoint a spokesperson to present the case.

- Due to the number of applications that need to be considered, the Chairperson may interrupt if someone is repeating a point that has already been made by another speaker.
- You may not interrupt others speakers or speak during the Committee discussion.

How is the decision announced?

During the Committee meeting, once a matter has been dealt with, the Committee Chairperson will announce the determination, or the recommendations to be presented from the Committee to the next meeting of the elected Council.

Will I be advised of the final decision?

Yes – following the final decision by Council, letters setting out the final decision are sent to the applicant and anyone who made a submission.

Can I leave before the end of the meeting?

Yes – though you are welcome to stay longer if you like.

What happens at the Council meeting?

The Committee Chairperson will stand up and “present” the report of the Committee. This report takes the form of a series of recommendations from the Committee on the matters that the Committee considered.

Individual matters are usually only referred to at the Council meeting by item number (e.g., Item No. 5). If you are coming along to the Council meeting you should get a copy of the meeting business papers (available at the entrance to the public gallery of the Council chambers) to help you follow what is happening.

The Mayor (who is the Chairperson of the Council Meeting) will indicate if the recommendations of the Committee have been accepted and “carried”. In some cases a matter will be discussed, or debated, by the Councillors and recommendations may then be changed. However, if an item is not discussed then the recommendations of the Committee are accepted.

May I speak at the Council meeting about the application and my comments?

No – Council policy states that members of the community are not permitted to speak at Council meetings about applications for development or rezoning. Councillors are acting in a judicial role on these matters at the meetings – their conduct is constrained by legal requirements on the ways in which they can go about making their final decisions.

Any other questions?

If you have any other questions about your speaking rights at the Committee, or about a particular proposal, please telephone 9952 8222.

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time and effort to write to us.

The Council is keen to improve its procedures for informing and involving the Community in the development of our city. If you have any comments about ways to improve these procedures please contact Council on 9952 8222.