

EFFECTIVE LAND USE TESTIMONY

VI. STRATEGY OPTIONS

There is a range of basic strategy options available for resolving concerns about a land use application (i.e., proposed development project).

Effective Land Use Testimony is one of those options. What is effective land use testimony training? Mostly it is about involvement and responsible leadership in neighborhood communities. First and foremost, the effective land use testimony training program promotes neighbors representing themselves in land use. There are four legs to the platform of effective land use testimony.

1. Citizen Involvement by Neighbors
2. Education of Individuals & Community
3. Local Leadership for All Interests & Issues of Community
4. Strong Responsible Representation

Neighbor Champions Take Responsibility Take responsibility. Verify the proposed land development activity. Learn the facts. Investigate any potential impacts of the proposal to community? Network. Lead by example. Discuss any issues and concerns with planning staff. Be sure of your facts when presenting or preparing comments. Stick to the issues, standards, and/or criteria of the land use application. Testimony that does not address the issues and standards and/or criteria for approval does not have to be considered by the decision makers.

STRATEGY OPTIONS

Some basic strategy options available for resolving concerns follow.

1. **Negotiate** with the applicant in hopes of reaching agreement.
2. **Coordinate with Planning Staff** to implement a solution through the planning process.
3. **Lobby Indirectly Key Decision-Makers** to adopt your preferred solution. It always helps to have a large group of citizens in a public meeting before the decision-makers and issue articles by reporters and concerned letters from neighbors in local newspapers.
4. **Submit Testimony**, submit written testimony and oral testimony comments.
5. **Initiate Legal Action** to force adoption of your preferred solution at the local level or LUBA.
6. **Change the Law**
7. **Change Decision-Makers**
8. **Preserve** the site.

In reality, many individuals and groups use a combination of strategy options. Citizens initiate discussions with staff and the applicant in hopes of reaching an agreement. Negotiations could reach an impasse. The citizens might then begin indirectly lobbying elected officials to prevent development impacts. If the citizens are dissatisfied with what elected officials offer then they can pursue legal options for preventing or overturning project approvals. **Once citizens begin the appeal process the applicant faces the possibility of spending large sums on lawyers and experts while ground-breaking is delayed.** This normally puts increased pressure on the applicant and may prompt a return to the negotiating table.

The success of most campaigns depends upon the amount of public support they have, which is a shorthand way of saying how many volunteers, dollars, and political clout they have amassed. So the first step in pursuing the various strategy options will be to expand your base of support.

Your Message To win the support of others you need to craft a concise message. There are three parts to the message.

1. The Impact How will the project affect your potential supporters? The more direct the impact the more influence your message will have. And the more the impact affects strongly-held values the more support you will generate.

2. The Solution What is your solution to prevent the impact? The more credible the solution, the more support you will generate.

3. The Request What is it you want your supporters to do?

Draft under construction.

Revised May 21, 2014