



Planning Services 'Planning Application Conference' (PAC)

Overview

A Planning Application Conference (PAC) is an informal meeting between participants of a current planning application lodged with Council. PAC's are sometimes arranged when objections are lodged to a planning application. It is an opportunity provided by Council to facilitate discussion between all parties.

It is not compulsory for parties to attend a PAC. Council, however, encourages parties to participate in the conference. A PAC does not alter any participants' statutory rights in regards to the planning process.

Outcomes

A PAC may have the following outcomes:

- Enable applicants to appreciate objectors' concerns, statutory and Council process for determining applications;
- Enable objectors to understand the details of the application, statutory and Council procedure involved in the consideration of the application;
- Explore any opportunities for compromise or resolution, which are not at the expense of a sound outcome;
- Ensure that all relevant information is available for preparation of a report;
- Avoid the need for appeals;
- Ensure each party clearly understands 'the planning process' and their respective legal rights;
- Enable officers to clarify issues raised in objections.

Format

A PAC may be held on site or within Council meeting rooms. The times for meetings are usually within normal business hours, however, time and location may vary dependent upon the circumstances of each application. If a PAC is scheduled, the permit applicant and all objectors are invited via letter.

A Council representative will facilitate the meeting, which will generally be conducted along the following lines:

- Introductions & outline of meeting – Council representative
- Objectors explain concerns
- Applicant responds
- Council representative – facilitates discussion, summarises and outlines the future process

It is estimated that a PAC may last up to one and a half hours, depending on the type of application and number of objectors involved. The conference will not involve cross-examination or lengthy discussions upon the merits of the application. Participants may be represented by a consultant; however, as the meetings are informal, participants should consider the merits of consultants or legal representation.

As an informal meeting, minutes of the conference will not be taken. Notes, attendees and outcomes from the conference may be recorded by representatives. Any agreements must be in writing and circulated to all parties either on the day or after the PAC. If an application is changed by amended plans etc, objectors and other parties may be given an opportunity to view details and make further comment.

It is not anticipated that Councillors will attend all PAC's, however; Councillors are informed of all PAC's that have been scheduled. In the event Councillors elect to attend the PAC their role will be the same as other participants, ie able to ask questions and make comment, but not bind Council in any way.

Participation

Whilst a PAC is an informal meeting, all participants are expected to show respect and consideration to all parties. If persons attend the PAC it is assumed that each person is willing to explain their views as well as listen to the views of others.

If you require an onsite interpreter please contact Customer Service on 1300 850 600.

Further Information

Council considers that a PAC can assist all parties to be informed and understand the application process and timelines involved. It is a Council initiative, which creates an opportunity for open discussion, involvement, and may at times lead to mediation and resolution of issues in a planning application.

The Mornington Peninsula Shire's website contains more details on planning applications and the planning process.