Writing a Denial Letter

Grant Thomas, Door County Corporation Counsel
Kay Lutze, Shoreland Zoning Policy Coordinator

One Shot!! Why it is important!

- Denial letter sets the basis for moving forward
  - Provides documentation of the denial
  - Used for a variance hearing
  - Used for an appeal of your decision
  - Sent to attorney, Dept., Legislators, etc.
- Don’t take short cuts

Tone- Conveying Disappointing News

- Tone – Why is this important?
  - Affects how the reader receives the message you are communicating!
  - Professional and courteous.
  - Clear and concise.

Required Information

- Reference the application and identify the location and the proposal.
- Identify why the proposal cannot be authorized.
  - State section of ordinance and how the proposal doesn’t meet the requirement.
- Identify alternatives that are available.
  - Can the project be relocated or reduced in size, etc.....
  - Important if decides to pursue variance

Required Information cont.

- If a variance is one of the alternatives.
  - List standards that have to be legally met – don't imply that a variance is granted by paying a fee and going to a meeting
- Provide appeal paragraph.
  - Clock starts running with the date of the letter
- Offer assistance.
  - Provide survey, etc
- Copy all parties involved (builder, surveyor).

Note: Documentation

- Documentation is the key to success!!
- Provides history of previous discussions, etc.
- Phone conversation: Provide summary, date and caller and file it!
- Counter conversation: Provide summary, date and call and file it!!
- Take pictures when inspecting. Keep good field notes.

Questions? Comments?