

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Roger L. Stancil, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Review of the Internal Development Process

DATE: June 8, 2009

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide background information for a presentation by Town staff at your June 8 meeting. The presentation will update Council on our efforts to improve the internal development review process and to seek your thoughts about next steps.

BACKGROUND

Council goals for 2008 included a review of the planning and development process, beginning with a look at internal staff processes we could improve without the need for Council action. This review is also consistent with concerns expressed in a first round of Community Listening Sessions I conducted in the winter of 2006-07. Most participants stated improving the development review process without negatively affecting the results was a high priority.

In January of 2008, we retained the services of David Long to assist in facilitating staff and customer conversations about our Development Review Process. We identified approximately 40 staff members who assist in the review of all development applications received by the Planning Department. This group participated in joint workshops, department and staff level meetings and one-on-one meetings with the consultant. The group jointly developed a list of 40 potential issues that the Town Manager and staff could work to positively change. The consultant and I also met with representatives of the development community in June of 2008 and January of 2009 to seek their input into this process.

The directors of the departments involved met with the Town Manager and the executive team to review the list and recommend a select number of goals that staff could implement. The group identified three goals and selected a task force to lead the effort: Judy Johnson and Phil Mason from Planning, Mike Taylor and Curtis Brooks from Public Works and Dwight Bassett, our Economic Development Officer. The goals selected are as follows:

- 1) To halt incomplete applications. (Doing this early in the process would open the system up so that legitimate and complete applications could continue to flow through the system.)
- 2) To differentiate application types that would not require participation by all reviewers. (This means that not all applications need to be reviewed by everyone and applications can be handled differently based on the level of review rather than treating all applications the same. This could mean that we offer exemptions on projects in which the

impact for traffic and stormwater is of a size that the Planning staff can determine whether they meet our guidelines.)

- 3) To develop a technology solution to assist in the flow of information and tracking of applications.

The larger group continued to meet to share information across departmental lines about their respective roles in the development review process, how their departments operate and how they specifically handle development applications when they are received. The Task Force began meeting in October 2008 and met every other week until the end of December. The Task Force members continue to work on implementation of Goals 1 and 2.

DISCUSSION

We have worked to make changes to the process that we can implement without affecting the results. We have identified the measures by which we will evaluate our success. We will be working to identify a technology solution. The next step identified in the 2008 and 2009 goals is a discussion with Council about your interest in reviewing the requirements of the Land Use Management Ordinance and whether it is meeting expectations, reviewing the advisory board roles and process or other facets of the process that require Council action to modify.

A possible way to proceed is to allow us to continue our work toward implementing the goals and identifying a technology solution that helps us to further improve the development process. We could measure our progress and report to Council in January 2010.. We can also share what we continue to learn through our interaction with the development community and residents involved in the development process. If the Council has an interest in pursuing other improvements at that point, I suggest a work session to provide information and chart a course of action.

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that Council receive the presentation and schedule a work session in January 2010 to discuss results of the process improvements staff has implemented changes and decide next steps.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1) The list of goals developed by the large group**