



City of Las Cruces[®]

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

COUNCIL WORK SESSION SUMMARY ROUTING SLIP

Meeting Date September 22, 2014

TITLE: DEVELOPMENT / BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT PLANS

- Are there attachments to the Council Work Session Summary? Yes No
- Will there be a Video Presentation for this item? Yes No
- Will there be a PowerPoint Presentation for this item? Yes No
- If "yes", will a copy of the PowerPoint Presentation be included on the Council Work Session Agenda? Yes No

DEPARTMENT / ORGANIZATION	SIGNATURE	PHONE NO.	DATE
Drafter/Staff Contact		x 3125	9-17-14
Department Director			
Other			
Assistant City Manager/CAO (if applicable)			
Assistant City Manager/COO (if applicable)	for B Denmark	x 2271	9-17-14
City Manager	for Robert Gargen	X 3636	9/17/14



Council Work Session Summary

Meeting Date September 22, 2014

TITLE: Development / Business Improvement Plans

PURPOSE(S) OF DISCUSSION:

- Inform/Update
- Direction/Guidance
- Legislative Development/Policy

BACKGROUND / KEY ISSUES / CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:

Development review is an important function of the City of Las Cruces (City). It ensures that development construction plans and associated studies, reports, and other documents for both residential and commercial development meet the building requirements as set forth in the City design standards and building codes.

Recently, concerns from various stakeholders were brought forth to the City regarding the current development review process. As a result, meetings were scheduled with these stakeholders to discuss the issues and to seek input. Additionally, the City Council established a new five year strategic plan which contains goals relating to economic development and job creation. The City Manager's Office has pursued process, policy, and relationship proposals that will help achieve the Councils goals.

The purpose of the presentation is to inform the City Council about the proposed solutions and next steps in the process.

SUPPORT INFORMATION:

1. Attachment "A", PowerPoint Presentation

Development & Construction Review Process Changes

City Council Work Session
September 22, 2014



Why

To address issues/concerns from the private and public sectors related to the review process and the interactions between the parties.

City Manager Robert Garza started dialogs with affected stakeholders during spring of 2014.

- Architects
- Engineers
- Las Cruces Homebuilder Association
- Las Cruces Association of Realtors
- City Staff

Propose changes to the existing processes to make them more transparent, effective, efficient and timely as well as increase accountability of all the affected parties.

Identified Issues

Both the private and public sectors have issues with the review process which impact each other. Some of the issues identified are:

- Timeliness of reviews – City staff not meeting review deadlines and private sector not resubmitting in a timely manner.
- Thoroughness of reviews – City staff not performing complete and thorough review the 1st time and then adding additional comments on second or third review iterations.
- Appropriateness of comments – City staff making comment on items outside of their duties/span of authority or making comments not supported by code or adopted regulations (preference over code).
- Private sector submitting plans which are incomplete or with known inaccuracies.
- Private sector failing to address comments which are made during review and then resubmitting plans.
- Private sector failing to understand/recognize that staff must enforce adopted codes and regulations. Staff has limited ability to waive or deviate from those adopted standards.
- Private sector submitting poor plans in order to get clients “off their back”. Expect City staff to perform quality control function.

Recommended Actions

Mandatory pre-submittal meetings between review staff and applicant, their design professionals and contractor.

- New Commercial projects with a valuation of \$100,000 and higher
- Significant commercial remodels/alterations (Level 3 Alterations) as defined in International Existing Building Code and meeting \$100,000+ valuation
- Major Development Proposals (Master Plan Proposals, Annexations, PUD's)

Benefits include:

- Identifying major issues that would result in generation of comments during initial review and provide opportunity to correct before submitting. Address glaring errors in plans.
- Answer any specific code related questions that might be outstanding.
- Help reduce number of reviews through better upfront communication and ensuring plans are accurate and complete.

Establish Plan Review Committee (PRC)

- Consist of review staff.
- Formulates staff position and resolves internal issues, consolidates comments, addresses code compliance versus suggestions/recommendations and conditions.

Formalize post review meeting with PRC, applicant, design professional(s) and contractors.

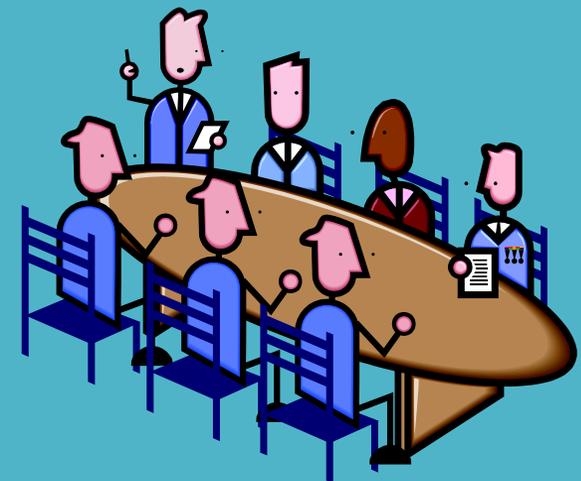
- Regularly scheduled meetings with reviewing staff present.
- Facilitate meeting between reviewing staff and applicant and their staff/consultants to go over comments made during review iteration and answer questions/provide direction.
- Help facilitate clean code-compliant resubmittal.
- Possibility to address minor comments and “redline” approval of plans at meeting.
- Ensure that applicant is receiving answers to questions or explanation of comments.

Revise Development Review Committee (DRC) membership

- Have DRC represented by Department Heads instead of lower level staff
 - *Community Development*
 - *Fire Chief*
 - *Public Works*
 - *Transportation*
 - *Utilities*

Benefits include

- More effective decision making
- Problem resolution – appropriate level of authority making decisions on behalf of city
- Policy direction knowledge
- Access to upper management by applicants
- Direction provided to staff



Developing a training program to assist staff in understanding their roles in the process and the types of applications/processes.

Establishing guidelines/policies to ensure consistent interpretation of code items, processes amongst inspectors and reviewing staff.

Amend applicable City Ordinances, i.e. Zoning Code, Building Code, Design Standards, and Subdivision Code to properly enable authority for staff to have more discretion and flexibility to resolve issues.

Create submittal checklists for public that outline typical issues that lead to plan denial to assist them in making sure those items are addressed.



Next Steps

- Staff is proceeding with the implementation of the items outlined and other related items.
- Code amendments are currently being drafted and will be forwarded to the Planning & Zoning Commission and/or City Council as appropriate.
 - *Revision of Rock Wall Standards and wall and fence permitting requirements*
 - *Amendment of Building Code to require pre-submittal meetings for certain projects*
 - *Amendment of Sign Code related to development directional signs - private sector proposal*
 - *Exploring feasibility of a technical rewrite of the Zoning Code to make it more user friendly*
- Policy guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures will be developed to assist staff in addressing issues and consistency.
- Initiating remodel of front entrance and counter to the Permitting Section to provide a more friendly and efficient customer service area.
- Staff changes are being considered which would incorporate a new position in Economic Development for a business liaison.
- Continued review of Permit Tracking/Plan Review Software packages to assist in more efficient and expedient plan review, document management and permit issuance.
- Ongoing monitoring by City Manager's Office to occur to ensure implementation is occurring.

Questions?

