

SULTAN CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

ITEM NO: A-2
DATE: July 23, 2009
SUBJECT: Permit Efficiency Task Force
CONTACT PERSON: Deborah Knight, City Administrator

ISSUE:

The issue before the City Council is to consider appointments to the permit efficiency task force.

The purpose of the task force is to develop recommendations for improving the City's procedures for issuing planning and building permits. The task force would work through the summer and fall of 2009.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Consider appointments to the permit efficiency task force. Since the closing date for applications is Monday, July 20, 2009, applications to the task force received on the closing date will be provided under separate cover.

Waiting until the first council meeting in August to make appointments will delay starting the task force. Starting the task force as quickly as possible is important in order to avoid overlapping meetings with the comprehensive plan work groups scheduled to begin in September.

SUMMARY:

At the council meeting on July 9, 2009, the City Council direct staff to advertise and take applications for appointment to a permit efficiency task force.

The decision to form a permit efficiency task force was based on a request from a local resident and business owner to evaluate the City's land use and building permit process. There is interest from the business community to serve on a permit task force. The outcome of the task force would be recommendations to the City Council on ways to improve the permit process.

In order to ensure balanced perspectives on the task force, staff recommend appointing two Sultan business owners, two land developers, three Sultan residents, one Planning Board

member and one Council member. The Planning Board will nominate a member at its meeting on July 21, 2009.

Task force members will meet at least twice per month in August and September. The panel may make recommendations to the Council in October during the Council's 2010 budget deliberations.

DISCUSSION:

The City is implementing significant changes in the permit process. These projects include the following:

1. Implementation of the Latimore Dashboard (computerized permit tracking system) used internally by staff to schedule completion of permit tasks, and viewable by the public on the City's web site so that they can see where their permit is in the review/approval process
2. A public-contact building inspector and plan reviewer in City Hall for two ½ days per week
3. New centralized filing system for quick access to customer contacts and permit filing
4. Re-vitalizing the practice of weekly Development Review Team meetings to provide coordinated development review
5. New permit intake checklist procedures so that any staff in City Hall can help an applicant submit a complete and approvable application
6. Increasing the number of permit applications and other documents accessible on-line to reduce the need for trips to City Hall
7. Increased use of digital approval of permit applications by staff members to reduce the need for paper flow through the system

The City is currently working with Kurt Latimore to improve the City's permit process. The Council will consider a proposal to extend Mr. Latimore's contract. The task force efforts could tie in with the work Mr. Latimore is proposing to complete by December 2009.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The proposed task force would be supported by city staff. There may be some additional costs involved if the Council includes support for the task force in the amended Latimore contract.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Review applications received to participate on the task force. Consider appointments to the permit task force . This alternative implies the City Council

is interested in getting input from the Sultan community on ways to improve the city's permit process. This alternative may have some impacts on other staff priorities unless the Council adjusts the schedule to begin the comprehensive plan update.

2. Review the applications received but do not take action. This alternative implies the City Council has concerns regarding the applications and timing of the proposal with other work plan items such as the 2011 comprehensive plan update.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Consider applications to the permit efficiency task force and make appointments.

Note – no applications were received prior to the July 20, 2009 closing date. Applications to serve on the task force will be provided under separate cover.