

## **SULTAN CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET**

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**ITEM NO:** A-2  
**DATE:** September 24, 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 look for opportunities to streamline the city's development regulations and improve the City's procedures for issuing planning and building permits. The task force would work through the end of 2009.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Appoint the following community members to the permit efficiency task force:

- CH Rowe – Sultan business owner and former Mayor
- Tom Lochmann - Director of Operations Romac Industries
- Nathan Porter – Sultan business owner
- Steve Harris – Developer
- Jerry Knox – Planning Board member

### **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 city advertised the opportunity, but did not receive any applications. On July 24, 2009, the City Council left the opportunity open to serve on the task force.

On September 16, 2009, at the meeting with property owners in the industrial park, several property and business owners expressed concerns regarding city development regulations and the process to receive land use approvals and building permits. City staff asked if anyone was interested in serving on the permit task force. The proposed appointees volunteered<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Jerry Knox was appointed by the Planning Board on July 21, 2009.

## **BACKGROUND:**

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 now 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 streamline development regulations and the permit process.

In order to ensure balanced perspectives on the task force, staff recommended appointing two Sultan business owners, two land developers, three Sultan residents, one Planning Board member and one Council member. The Planning Board nominated Steve Harris at its meeting on July 21, 2009. There are still open positions for land developers and city residents. However, there is a core group ready to start work. Staff recommend beginning this work immediately.

Task force members will meet at least twice per month in October and November. The task force may make recommendations to the Council in December.

## **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 and consider recommendations for appointment 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 development regulations and 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 proposed appointments and timing of the proposal with other work plan items such as the 2011 comprehensive plan update.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Appoint the following community members to the permit efficiency task force:

- CH Rowe – Sultan business owner and former Mayor
- Tom Lochmann - Director of Operations Romac Industries
- Nathan Porter – Sultan business owner
- Steve Harris – Developer
- Jerry Knox – Planning Board member