




MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 26, 2016

TO: Robert Baldwin, City Manager

FROM: Marc LaFerrier, AICP, Director of Community Development 

SUBJECT: Discussion of a Proposed Special Permit Office

During the past five years the number of building permits and inspections by the Community Development Department has increased by more than 400%. Furthermore, the scale and complexity of the new land development projects have also increased significantly. The City's current Community Development staff properly serves the development community in a timely and effective manner. However, the upcoming Dania Pointe and other projects (i.e. DCOTA, Phase 2 - Dania Jai-Alai) will further increase the workload for the Building Division. During the upcoming two (2) to six (6) years, it is anticipated that the Building Division's work load could double and further increase the demand for permit services. In order to properly and effectively provide prompt and efficient service for large scale building projects without impacting other permit applications, it is recommended that the City create a special permit office that is specifically dedicated to large scale development projects. This special permit office would allow applicants of large scale projects to receive "on demand" plan review and inspection services that are independent of the daily Building Division activities. This special permit office would be under the direction of the Community Development Director. Revenues derived from the special permit office would be expended to offset personnel, equipment and other related costs.

The special permit office will allow developers of large scale projects the opportunity to receive expedited and prioritized service. The need for this new permit office will be temporary in-nature (2 to 6 years) and not permanent, therefore, Community Development recommends the City acquire additional staffing through contractual services. The City currently contracts with Broward County for a Building Official and building plan review and inspection services. The code compliance responsibilities of building permit services are fulfilled by the Building Official. The administrative and management oversight of these services is the responsibility of the Community Development Director. The request for additional contractual services is limited to providing supplemental building permit services. The existing Building Division staff would be integrated with the technical, clerical and management responsibilities of the new office in order to provide proper oversight, continuity and back-up support. Components of the new permit office and the associated estimated costs for the remainder of FY16 include the following:

- Additional staff needed for the new permit office will be provided by a contract agency that will supplement the Broward County Building Division staff. Six (6) new plans examiners/inspectors at an estimated cost of \$240,000.00. Funding for these services is requested to be appropriated from the Building Fund

Contingency Account # 107-15-02-524-99-10 to the Building Fund Professional Services Account #107-15-02-524-31-10

- Two (2) new clerical staff will be needed to supplement the current City staff. Estimated cost for the remainder of fiscal year 2016 is \$56,000.00. Funding request will be brought forth to the Commission as necessary once these services have been solicited.
- Office space build-out on the ground floor of City Hall in the former BSO office is estimated to cost \$32,000.00. (Account #: 107-15-02-524-52-20 Amount: \$32,000 budgeted in FY16)
- Additional vehicles will be provided by the recommended contractor. (\$0.)
- Permitting software will be the same as the City's current provider, New World Systems (NWS). Additional computer hardware, work stations, printers, phones etc. will be funded from the building fund. (Account #: 107-15-02-524-52-30 Amount: \$27,000 budgeted in FY16)

Qualified contractors in South Florida capable of providing the necessary certified and accredited staff for building permit and inspection services are limited. Broward County, Calvin Giordano & Assoc. and C.A.P. Government Inc. provide supplemental permit and inspections services for several local jurisdictions (i.e. Hollywood, Davie, Ft. Lauderdale, Weston, Oakland Park, Pompano Beach, Pembroke Pines) similar to that needed by the City of Dania Beach. Staff has reviewed proposals and contracts from other cities in Broward County. Dania Beach could piggy-back on qualified contracts from another city to provide these services.

It is anticipated that plans for Phase I of the Dania Pointe project will be submitted in July to August 2016. Staff will need approximately 60 days of lead time to build-out the new office space, buy equipment and train staff. The funding needed to create and operate the new special permitting office will be derived from the existing budget for FY 2016. For FY 2017 the building permit fees paid by the large scale projects are anticipated to generate \$3M to \$4M in permit fees. These additional revenues are anticipated to adequately fund the capital, contractual and personal expenses needed for the new special permitting office for FY 2017.

Following the Commissions' review and comment on this proposal, staff can prepare the agenda items necessary for the City Commission to create and fund a special permit office.