



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH
PLANNING COMMISSION COMMUNICATION

TO: Chair and Planning Commission

VIA: Scott Hess, AICP, Director of Planning

FROM: Herb Fauland, Planning Manager *HF*

SUBJECT: **ITEM C-5: PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP –
PERMIT PROCESSING/CUSTOMER SERVICE**

DATE: March 20, 2008

Attached please find the presentation materials for the discussion of Item C-5: Permit Processing/Customer Service. The attachments are provided for your review and provide a starting point for discussion with the Planning Commission.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Excerpts: City Council Study Session – October 2007
- 2) Additional Process Improvements – Summary Sheet
- 3) Planning Department Improvements - memo dated December 20, 2007

Excerpts: City Council Study Session – October 2007

PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS – PRE-APPLICATION

- ✓ Currently offering appointments for application screening and submittals (no fee)
- ✓ Offer more opportunities for applicants to present their projects before the Development Assistance Team (DAT) in advance of filing their applications
- ✓ Continue to update and expand the number of informational handouts for better explanation of the permit process
- ✓ Evaluate and update application forms

PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS – APPLICATION PROCESSING

- ✓ Distribute plans to other Departments within two days from submittal date
- ✓ Utilize Development Assistance Team (DAT) for joint review by all Departments within three weeks of application submittal on major projects
- ✓ Improve efficiency of application completeness
- ✓ Complete application letter revised to include anticipated hearing date
- ✓ Applications to Zoning Administrator within 2 months; to Planning Commission within 3-4 months

PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS – CUSTOMER SERVICE

- ✓ Expand role of project planner concept to include managing the project from start to finish
- ✓ Expand notification of second opinion service
- ✓ Evaluate the Design Review Board's process, code provisions, and Board membership
- ✓ Automate existing planned sign programs to make them more accessible to the public
- ✓ Re-evaluating and updating customer service goals and standards

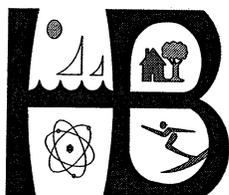
Additional Process Improvements

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

- ✓ Full time supervisor of counter and plan check
- ✓ Counter assistance/Thank You card
- ✓ Develop in-house training program
- ✓ Customer service training for staff
- ✓ Advanced email notification of public hearing agendas
- ✓ Periodic meetings with Chamber of Commerce to open dialogue with business community

COMMUNICATIONS – DEPARTMENT WEB SITE

- ✓ General Plan and Specific Plans
- ✓ Environmental Impact Reports and Mitigated Negative Declarations
- ✓ Monthly newsletter – updating major projects
- ✓ Publish Annual Report – “How To” guides
- ✓ Zoning Administrator and Planning Commission reports
- ✓ Planning Applications



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH
Inter Office Communication
Planning Department

TO: Mayor and City Council Members
VIA: Penelope Culbreth-Graft, DPA - City Administrator
FROM: Scott Hess, Director of Planning
DATE: December 20, 2007
SUBJECT: PLANNING DEPARTMENT IMPROVEMENTS –CUSTOMER SERVICE/ZUCKER REPORT/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS UPDATE

The following is an update of the ongoing Department improvements to address customer service, the development review process, and the Zucker Report. Many of these items have been implemented by staff and continue to be evaluated for efficiency and adequacy.

CUSTOMER SERVICE:

- The role of the project planner concept has been expanded to include managing the project from start to completion. This provides consistent oversight and management of a project from initial concept to entitlement to construction to final inspections and certificate of occupancy. The planner is also involved in future issues, if they arise at the project site, to provide necessary management of any issues
- The notification of the Planning Department's second opinion program has been expanded. The service is advertised on the Department's web site, notices have been displayed at the counter and in the 3rd floor display case. The planners have also been instructed to advertise this service when discussing an issue with customers at the counter.
- A comprehensive training of staff in areas of zoning code and subdivision requirements, and State Law (e.g., California Environmental Quality Act, Coastal Act, urban design principles, FEMA, and Uniform Building Code) has been instituted (see Zucker Report #47). A training session on a specific topic is scheduled at each weekly project review meeting and as necessary at each bi-weekly counter staff meeting. In addition, staff is encouraged to attend select college and APA sponsored planning and land use seminars.
- The amount of information available on the Planning Department's website has been expanded. These include the City's General Plan, Zoning Map, Specific

Plans, and the Department's processing handouts. In addition we've added the Department Newsletter, Annual Report, entitlement applications, and Green Building information. Also, we are considering including a link to some of Economic Development Department's downloadable documents such as "How to do Business in Huntington Beach."

- A full-time supervisor of counter operations and plan check is in place and is empowered to make decisions, find solutions and resolve conflicts. Up until a few months ago there was only a part-time supervisor (see Zucker Report # 69 & #70).
- Instituted a customer sign-in process at the Planning and Zoning Counter for tracking of time spent assisting customers and type of requests for future reference (see Zucker Report #54). The information is used to monitor time, efficiency, and the number of customers served.
- Created a Customer Assistance/Thank You card (see attached) to provide customers visiting the public counter the ability to contact staff for follow-up questions, request a second opinion on answers, and seek consultation with other development services departments.

ZUCKER REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Require large scale projects to have early project review (#43) – Ongoing
- Meet with City Council and Planning Commission (#44) - Ongoing
- Continue monthly publication schedule for newsletter (#45) - Ongoing
- Increase communication to other departments (#46) – Ongoing
- Develop in-house training program (#47) – Ongoing
- Provide adequate training budget (#48) – Approved in 2007/08 budget
- Address staff morale issues (#49) – Ongoing
- Develop Department Work Program (#50) – Ongoing
- Only accept quantitatively complete applications (#51) – Ongoing
- Revise Code Requirements letter/include appeal language (#52 & 53) – Completed
- Serve 95% of customers within 15 minutes (#54) – In progress
- Include direct phone numbers and email on business cards (#55) – Completed
- Revise DRB Membership (#56) – In progress
- Reaffirm DRB scope and authority (#57) – In progress
- Update DRB submittal guidelines (#58) – In progress

- Distinguish between design guidelines and requirements (#59) – Completed
- Revise requirements for DRB approval (#60) - In progress
- File on Planner's desk and distribute plans to other departments within two days of plan submittal (#61) - Completed
- Create management reports from CityView (#64) – In progress
- Evaluate management reports re: deadlines (#65) – In progress
- Counter Supervisor to perform plan checks (#69) – Completed
- Scale back duties of Counter Supervisor (#70) – In progress
- Review building plans in 5 days or less (#71) – In progress
- Review 95% of building plans within benchmarks (#72) – In progress
- Set goals for specific process reviews (#73) - Completed
- Set process goals for all reviews types (#74) - Completed
- Planning Director/Manager not to handle project cases directly (#75) - Completed

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS:

- Continue to establish timelines and expectations for staff performance of processing Administrative Permits as well as entitlements scheduled for the Zoning Administrator and Planning Commission to monitor staff efficiency and process improvements (see Zucker Report #73).
- Continue to prepare additional staff reports for Planning Commission Study Sessions in compliance with the adopted Planning Commission Project Review Process. The process assists with the efficiency of decision making.
- Continue to update and add public informational handouts about the permit review process.
- Only one vacant planning position remains. The recruitment has begun.

PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS:

- Continue offering appointments for application screening and submittals. By offering appointments, there is predictability in the amount of time needed to file applications. In addition, all departments could be invited to the meeting so the applicant can receive a thorough review of their application at time of submittal thereby reducing the possibility of an incomplete application file. There is no fee for this service (see Zucker Report #43 & #46).
- Continue to offer more opportunities for applicants to present their projects before the Development Assistance Team (DAT) in advance of filing an application. DAT

provides preliminary recommendations to the applicant on a broader basis than previously utilized. In addition, written responses and staff's opinion of the proposal are expressed at these meetings (see Zucker Report #43 & #46).

- Continue to evaluate and update the application submittal requirements list for efficiency purposes. The list has been evaluated and will be redesigned to be more projects specific (this was a recommendation by the Chamber of Commerce). It will identify what items must be submitted at the various stages of review. The amount of information and detail required will be re-assessed to determine if it is excessive, adequate, or insufficient for processing purposes (see Zucker Report #51).
- In progress of drafting a processing schedule for distribution to the public which includes a schedule of Design Review Board, Zoning Administrator and Planning Commission hearing dates.
- In addition to providing applicants the basic application submittal requirements, staff distributes a copy of the City's plan check list based on the type of project. This provides the applicants the opportunity to better understand the standards that staff reviews for compliance with the code.

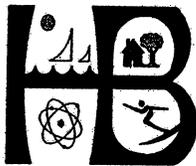
Application Processing:

- Continue to evaluate CityView for project tracking information between departments. There are currently two to three programs; look for one system.
- Utilize DAT for joint review by all departments within three weeks of application submittal and invite the applicant. This meeting could identify code issues, allow for solutions of issues, and discuss project conditions (see Zucker Report #46).
- Expand number of standardized templates for Planning Commission staff reports. This will improve efficiency and consistency between staff reports.
- Continue to evaluate internal review times of staff reports.

Customer service and process improvement are continuous. As the City continues implementing the Council adopted Strategic Plan Goals and improves the efficiency of the development review process, management staff will continue to foster a work culture that encourages creativity, teambuilding, process improvement, and quality customer service.

Attachment: Customer Assistance/Thank You card

- c: Planning Commission
Executive Team
Development Assistance Team
Planning Staff



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH

Planning Department
2000 Main Street, 3rd Floor
Huntington Beach, CA 92648

Thank you for visiting the Planning and Zoning counter today (date) _____
We hope we have answered all of your questions and provided the information y
requested. For further assistance please contact me, (planner's name) _____
at (714) 536-5271.

If you would like a second opinion regarding a particular issue, please contact t
appropriate individual at (714) 536-5271:

- Jason Kelley (Plan Check, Counter Inquiries)
- Herb Fauland (Entitlement Processing)
- Bill Zylla (Neighborhood Preservation / Code Enforcement)

Your project may also require consultation with the following Department(s):

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building and Safety
714-536-5241 | <input type="checkbox"/> Business License
714-536-5267 | <input type="checkbox"/> City Clerk
714-536-5227 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development
714-536-5582 | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Department
714-536-5411 | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Works
714-536-5431 |

It was a pleasure serving you!