



Las Vegas

Agenda Item No.: 4.

AGENDA SUMMARY PAGE
SPECIAL JOINT CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF:
SEPTEMBER 20, 2010

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR: MARGO WHEELER

Consent Discussion

SUBJECT:
Presentation and update on the implementation of the Development Review Process Report developed by Kirchhoff & Associates

Fiscal Impact

- No Impact Augmentation Required
- Budget Funds Available

Amount:
Funding Source:
Dept./Division:

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND:

The city of Las Vegas is restructuring the development review process (DRP) to more effectively meet the needs of its customers. The DRP includes the steps necessary to obtain permits and other documents needed during the building and planning process. The city hired outside consultants, Kirchhoff & Associates, to conduct an analysis of the existing review process. That analysis was completed in December of 2009. To assist in the implementation of the identified recommendations, a DRP Implementation Team was formed. To date, the Implementation Team has identified which findings from the study are applicable, identified gaps in the findings, identified which departments are be poised to lead the improvement process, prioritization of the final list of findings, and taken action on many of the items. Staff will report on the progress made by the DRP Implementation Team.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the update and direct staff accordingly.

BACKUP DOCUMENTATION:

Submitted at Meeting PowerPoint Presentations and 2010 Nevada APA State Conference Schedule by Staff

Minutes:

Using the PowerPoint submitted as part of the record, MARGO WHEELER, Director of Planning and Development (Planning), discussed Plannings leadership efforts on major initiatives and plans since 2005 and those going forward into the future. She described the steps taken to incorporate all of the policies adopted into projects and plans, while noting that these efforts resulted from a blended effort with other departments and community developers. She referred to the Unified Development Code and indicated that it will be brought forward to the City Council in October.



SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF:
MAY 20, 2010

DEPUTY CITY MANAGER JIM NICHOLS reviewed the PowerPoint presentation dealing with the Development Review Process (DRP). He recalled the history of the DRP, identified the departments involved in this process and the findings under the assessment. A major concern was the dire need for Code revisions relative to the licensing process. In addition, departments cooperate without the collaboration between them in needs improvement. He discussed the current actions in progress to address the findings and accomplishments to date. The Preliminary Activity Review (PAR) will provide comprehensive information regarding a project from start to finish, improve DRP reviews by staff, decrease the number of resubmissions and include a developers forum to communicate changes in policies and code interpretations.

COUNCILMAN ROSS and DEPUTY CITY MANAGER NICHOLS discussed the specific training created with Sun and Resourcis and the 250 members of the DRP, who will have completed that training by next week. Although feedback has been positive yet informal on the implemented changes, the intent is to conduct a study in approximately one year to examine the results and make any necessary adjustments to the process. COUNCILMAN ROSS was interested in the feedback from the community and felt it was important that the various industries be made aware of these changes which have been long overdue.

DEPUTY CITY MANAGER NICHOLS described the things that the Mayor, Council and Planning Commission can do to support the efforts identified in the PowerPoint presentation. He explained for COUNCILWOMAN TARKANIAN that the City is at a competitive disadvantage in having a process that is cumbersome; however, making amends to the DRP and the Code will be critical to the City's success in becoming the preferred agency to do business with.

COUNCILMAN ROSS asked that staff prepare a package to announce this information and urged that the message be distributed throughout the community and press. Due to the competitiveness of other agencies, he stressed the importance of customer service and making the process easier for developers.

MAYOR GOODMAN discussed with DEPUTY CITY MANAGER NICHOLS specific changes that will benefit the community and developers, such as the pre-planning conferences with staff. Addressing COUNCILMAN WOLFSONS query regarding marketing, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER NICHOLS explained that an internal newsletter is forthcoming and a website has been created specifically for the DRP, which includes the findings from the Kirchhoff and Associates Report. In addition, he is available to speak at conferences/events upon request and staff is open to other recommendations that will enhance marketing efforts.

CHAIR TRUESDELL was surprised that those individuals/departments that work directly with these developers are not the ones spreading the message but should be. He felt it was imperative that the community feel the City is the place to do business.

COMMISSIONER TROWBRIDGE commended the steps taken to date but wondered when the process would be deemed fully implemented. DEPUTY CITY MANAGER NICHOLS replied



SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF:
MAY 20, 2010

that it will take time, given there were 95 findings; however, changes in efficiency can be seen now. Although the report indicated that 85 percent of the findings could possibly be adopted, the remaining findings may not be appropriate for the City.

COMMISSIONER EVANS questioned if there was a process in place to immediately measure success and failure. DEPUTY CITY MANAGER NICHOLS answered that the measurements are in place through the Performance Improvement Process, which measures time and efficiency across the City rather than by department.

COUNCILMAN ROSEN noted that with Planning making more items as final action at the Planning Commission meetings, it has shortened the development process which benefits the community.

CITY MANAGER ELIZABETH FRETWELL agreed with previous comments that interactions between staff and the community is a means by which to communicate this message and receive feedback. The goal is to have a process that is seamless and to have an entity performing at its best.

DOUG RANKIN, Planning Manager, reported that out of the 95 findings, 11 deal specifically with the Planning and Development Department. He reviewed the eight findings that have been completed; two are in the process of being worked on; and one is on hold. Staff also worked on having a Virtual Planner where all of the information is accessible; an electronic plans check whereby staff can inform the developer of what is needed; and a Unified Development Code by merging Title 18 Subdivision Ordinance with the Title 19 Zoning Code.

COUNCILMAN BARLOW wondered if the DRP provided an opportunity for Business Licensing to work with Planning to streamline the process. MR. RANKIN answered that the communication already exists daily, and Business Licensing now attends the pre-application conferences. Ninety-five percent of the applications are reviewed within three days and done so electronically, despite the need for updated computer systems and interfaces between multiple programs. DEPUTY CITY MANAGER NICHOLS and COUNCILMAN BARLOW both agreed that some of the efficiencies being questioned will be addressed upon both departments relocating to the Atrium.

COUNCILMAN REESE recognized the aforementioned changes dealt with new business but wondered what will be done to keep existing businesses within Las Vegas intact.

MAYOR GOODMAN discussed with CITY MANAGER FRETWELL the accountability aspect given the elimination of silos. CITY MANAGER FRETWELL responded that DEPUTY CITY MANAGER NICHOLS oversees the departments and provides direction regarding those involved in the DRP.