

DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY FORUM
October 12, 2005 - 7:30 to 9:00 a.m.
Meeting Minutes

Item #	Discussion Item:
10.12.05.I	<p><u>Welcome and Introductions:</u> Terry Williams</p> <p>Terry welcomed everyone and asked new attendees to introduce themselves.</p>
10.12.05.II	<p><u>Fire Department – Trench and Confined Space Ordinance:</u> Hal Key</p> <p>When the international fire code was adopted last year, one item that was missed was excavation and trenching. To rectify this error, the Fire Department is recommending an amendment to Title 7 of the Mesa City Code. The amendment adds a chapter (47) on excavations and confined spaces. Hal further explained that the amendment does not change any requirement, but duplicates the same requirements of the last fire code.</p>
10.12.05.III	<p><u>Municipal Building Renovation:</u> Terry Williams</p> <p>The renovation is underway of the entire building. The project is split into four phases and will span approximately one year. The project is slightly behind, but the contractor is making up time as much as possible.</p>
10.12.05.IV	<p><u>Building Safety Division – General Updates:</u> Terry Williams</p> <p>A. Fee Simplification: the final proposed report approved by Council in October. This simplified fee schedule will enable customers and staff to identify project fees earlier in the process and more definitively. The Division is targeting the end of November for completion with a new schedule implementation of 1/1/06.</p> <p>B. Code Changes: a minor ordinance change to “clean-up” code language including typos, missed words, punctuation, etc. Two other minor changes that will be included are issues heard by the Building Board of Appeals (BBA) – small mercantile (15 or less) service sink and drinking fountain requirements. The Division will align this change with the fee simplification for one smooth transition.</p> <p>C. E-Pay: the six-month pilot is coming to an end. This convenient tool has been underutilized, and the Division is requesting customers use this service to verify functionality.</p> <p>D. Marketing: Heather Gray, Marketing & Communications Specialist II, is coordinating a joint marketing effort for the Building Safety and Planning Divisions. The finished product (when completed) will be available on the website.</p> <p>E. Financial Picture: it is no secret that the City’s financial picture is grim. Several departments are facing sever cuts if additional revenue proposals are not approved. The Building Safety and Planning Divisions have been less affected by these pending cuts due to the restricted revenue fund. Additionally, the Building safety Division will be filling the current vacant Deputy Building Safety Director position.</p> <p>Questions: Are there any permit issues (revenue and/or permits issued increasing or decreasing)?</p> <p>The number of permits issued is down five percent (5%), but the Division continues to meet revenue target.</p>

<p>10.12.05.V</p>	<p><u>Planning Division Workplan:</u> John Wesley</p> <p>John provided a one-page handout, which summarized the voluminous workplan (twenty pages) and highlighted some of the current issues. The handout delineated all of John’s discussion points.</p>
<p>10.12.05.VI</p>	<p><u>Planning Division Application Fee (Increase Proposal):</u> John Wesley</p> <p>John discussed the pending 20% (majority of Planning’s fees) proposed increase, which has the goal of moving Planning closer to full cost recovery. The original proposal also included hiring two new staff members – one (1) Administrative Support Assistant (ASA) and one (1) Planning Assistant (PA). An alternate idea being explored is project-oriented reviews. This would enable one (or more) staff members to remain the reviewers on the project all the way through the process; for this concept, the City is divided into four geographical areas. Each area will be assigned a P&Z, DRB, and Subdivision planner to work as a team to carry all area projects from pre-submittal through final approval. One shortfall for this idea is staffing; the Division is currently 1.5 Planners short to successfully implement such a plan. Therefore, instead of hiring an ASA and a PA, the Division would request 1.5 additional Planner l’s.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>1. Will this team concept allow the Planning Division to move to more concurrent reviews?</p> <p>Maybe, new ideas and concepts are being fielded and reviewed for the potential to decrease time off project review times.</p> <p>2. Is this similar to Phoenix’s Village Planning?</p> <p>There are some similarities, but Planning is not familiar enough with this Phoenix program to make a comparison.</p> <p>3. How will the program fluctuate with economic cycles? As peaks and valleys occur, will resources be strained/underutilized?</p> <p>This is always a concern. The program and the division itself are not operated under full cost recovery. The workload will decrease (in volume) as the City approaches build-out, but cases submitted will be more complicated. This expounds staff time and resources similar to a large volume of simplistic cases.</p> <p>4. How does Planning compare in the region with this new fee increase proposal?</p> <p>This increase puts us closer to the top.</p> <p>5. The handout mentions the light rail area, how will this affect design guidelines for the light rail area?</p> <p>Council has given staff direction to encourage the light rail areas to have a mixed-use and to be designed for pedestrian friendly. The Transit-Oriented Development Ordinance should make that process easier.</p>
<p>10.12.05.VII</p>	<p><u>Presubmittal Application Process (Update):</u> Laura Hyneman</p> <p>Laura provided some general feedback from focus groups the Planning Division lead – the Presubmittal should be designed to allow participants to get information earlier without investing significant money developing plans for review. One idea discussed and suggested is the addition of a “big picture presub conference”, which would give a preliminary, quick look at planning issues. Applicants would provide basic information such as a project description, a conceptual site plan with building footprints, parking and vehicular circulation. This conference is not intended to add another process, but rather offers an alternative method of determining project feasibility. The</p>

Division will continue to provide its “tell us everything approach”. The application for this conference would remain the same and the applicant would provide a project description, more developed plans, and specific questions; the resultant here is more detailed information.

Questions and Comments:

1. Is there a fee for this new process?

Yes since staff time is required. The fee is the same as any other presubmittal application, but applications only have to pay this one time/project over a six-month period.

2. Will there be more presubmittal dates available?

No, not as it stands right now.

3. Will there be a difference in disciplines present at the meetings?

Mostly Planning staff and maybe some senior level staff.

4. Is this “big picture” program optional? Yes

5. The pre-submittal and subdivision technical reviews seem redundant, has there been talk about combining these two reviews?

We are always looking for ways of streamlining processes.

6. If you submit during the “big picture” and presubmittal also, are there two fees?

No, one fee/six months with as many reviews as you like. The “big picture” will just not include detailed information.

7. This is a good program, the commercial developers want information as early as possible.

8. Will Fire (review discipline) be included as well, drive aisles, turning radiuses? Will the fire lane vertical requirement be removed?

Fire can be included, but the Fire Department does not see these restrictions lessening; the turning radiuses and vertical requirements are designed for the largest trucks and the trucks are not getting smaller. The Fire Department bases the requirements on the closest, largest vehicle responding.

9. Is Planning concerned that it's creating semi-formal meetings instead of just answering questions?

In the informal settings, staff can advise customers to make decisions earlier without spending a large amount of resources and without formalizing a project.

10. SCIP, DIP, PIC? Suggesting adding more steps or options and yet it still takes nine months to get through the process?

In the past, detail has been the enemy. This new option keeps the information informal and high-level.

11. A project (review) summary should be created and should follow the life of the project.

12. There seems to be a three-branched approached per customer type, and the overlap is too much; this lengthens the process.

13. Can you improve the information back to the customers? The information included in the packets is not useful to specific customers.

14. One consideration - is there a way to get the total information, e.g. infrastructure. All City information should be incorporated, for example there is no information from Real Estate or no information on lot splits.

<p>10.12.05.VIII</p>	<p><u>Development Review Process (Questionnaire):</u> Laura Hyneman</p> <p>A survey was distributed (previously emailed) and Laura requested everyone take some time to complete and submit it and to provide as much information as possible.</p>
<p>10.12.05.IX</p>	<p><u>Open Discussion:</u></p> <p>Blue Stake (HB2256) – Steve Hether There have been some changes in the Arizona Blue Stake requirements in regards to underground facilities' signal devices, and how municipalities will have to enforce the requirements. The new legislation is unclear, and the Building Safety Division would like the development community to share information (if available) on this new part of the process. Please email any comments/input to Steve Hether. Any information received will be consolidated and put on our website for clarity.</p> <p>Mesa Engineering Design Standards Dave Heinert (Building Safety Division) advised the group these design standards are being updated. Some of the updates are meant to make the document user-friendly and to provide easier reference. Watch for more information on this topic at the next forum.</p> <p>Fire & Public Safety Impact Fees The City is in the public comment period for the proposed changes to these two fees, which will culminate at a public hearing on 11/7/05 (City Council meeting).</p> <p>Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One group member noted that he did not believe the use of impact fees was fair in redevelopment projects. If impact fees have already been paid, remodeling a building should not warrant additional demand for services. • Another group member lauded the Building Safety Division for moving to one non-residential category regardless of commercial use with the new fee schedule.
<p>The Next Meeting regularly scheduled Development Advisory Forum is slotted for January 11th, 2006.</p>	