



## MEMORANDUM

Date: 5/4/2015

To: Honorable Board of County Commissioners

From: Ty Harris, Director – Community Development

Subject: Community Development Fee Schedule Changes

The Community Development Department provides, among other things, permitting service for all activities relating to land management issues within the County.

Currently, the associated fees for these areas exist in two separate resolutions of fees and not in a cohesive and consistent single fee schedule. The department proposes combining all fees charged by the Community Development Department for any land related activities into one fee schedule. In addition, the department wishes to make certain amendments to the fees in certain areas of the fee schedules. The changes are listed below:

- 1) The department performs a lien/ code case/ permits research service that is heavily utilized by title companies and property research companies. The service includes a list of any outstanding code enforcement liens, any open code enforcement cases and any expired permits along with what needs to happen to resolve the issues (including lien pay-off amounts). The current charge for this service is \$10. The Building Industry Oversight Committee has recommended that this fee be raised to \$35 to adequately cover the time that this research takes.
- 2) A permit becomes expired if there has been no approved activity on a permit within the past six months. This could be in the form of the permit being issued or a passing inspection. Once the permit has expired, any work at that job site should be halted as there is no longer an active permit at the site. In order to reactivate the permit, the contractor or owner must pay a fee. The current fee is an amount that is equal to the building portion of the original fee, regardless of the value of the original fee. In some cases, this is cost prohibitive and rather than renew the expired permit, contractors and owners risk working without a valid permit. In order to encourage permits to be renewed, the department recommends implementing a tiered fee for larger permits. The structure would be as follows:

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Renewal Type	Initial permit cost (building)	Renewal cost
Flat Fee Trade permits	\$90	\$90 per renewal
All other permits – 1 <sup>st</sup> Renewal	Various	\$200 or 25% of the initial building fee whichever is greater
All other permits – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Renewal	Various	\$200 or 50% of the initial building fee whichever is greater
All other permits – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Renewal	Various	\$200 or 75% of the initial building fee whichever is greater
All other permits – 4 <sup>th</sup> Renewal	Various	\$200 or 100% of the initial building fee whichever is greater

Staff recommends that this portion of the fee schedule only be retroactive to April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.

- 3) The department has a policy relating to multiple permits of the same type at condo units. As this is becoming more prevalent, it is appropriate to include this policy in to the resolution of fees. The addition is as follows:
  - Permit applications meeting all of the criteria listed below will be charged at \$45 plus the state mandated surcharge of \$4 per permit:
    - Permits must be for the same residential condo building or neighboring structures on the same street
    - Individual permits must be needed per residential unit
    - Permits must all be of the same type and must be one of the following type:
      - Mechanical (Air Conditioning replacement etc.)
      - Electrical
      - Plumbing (Water heater etc.)
      - Door and/or Window Replacement
      - Shutters
      - Minor structural repair.
    - Applicable to 10 or more applications at the same time
    - Inspections must be called in for 5 or more units at the same time.
    - Any additional inspections will be charged at the regular \$50 re-inspection fee.
    - Renewals of these permits should they be allowed to expire will be at the full permit fee with no discount.
- 4) In the planning section of the department, the following changes are proposed:
  - a. Addition of a \$250 fee to process and review the Bi-Annual Report required as part of the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) process. This is equal to the fee collected by the regional planning council.
  - b. The combination of the small scale and the large scale zoning amendment fees into one fee. Currently the small scale amendment is \$60 more expensive than the large scale amendment. The effort is equal for each and therefore any amendment should be charged at the fee for the small scale amendment of \$2,490
  - c. Staff also recommends adding language to allow excessive recording and advertising fees to be charged to the applicant as these can often be more than the initial cost of the application.
- 5) In the zoning section, the following changes are proposed:

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- a. Eliminate fees for copies of zoning regulations and copies of updates to the zoning regulations. These are no longer provided as they are available online.
- b. Eliminate the fee for notary services – the department does not charge for these services in relation to an application.
- c. Combine the Zoning Variance and Special Exception into one fee at \$880. The processes are very similar and have the same level of effort.
- d. Increase the fee for zoning letters and flood zone determinations from \$25 to \$35 to account for the increasing complexity of the research involved.
- e. Combine the specific categories of zoning review from 12 categories to 4 categories, simplifying the fee schedule. The four categories would be as follows and plans changes and restamps would be charged at the same amount:
  - i. Seawalls, Boat Lifts and Docks \$95.00
  - ii. Residential and Commercial Miscellaneous \$22.00
  - iii. New Commercial Review \$65.00
  - iv. Fences (Residential or Commercial) \$30.00
- f. Addition of a fee for Minor Home Occupations which is currently not charged for but takes time for research and issuance of a certificate for the applicant to use to obtain a Local Business Tax Receipt. This fee is proposed to be set at \$50
- g. Adjustment of resubmittals for landscaping and tree permits to \$50 to be in line with other resubmittals (currently charged between \$60 and \$95.).

These changes will have a minimal impact on the revenue collected by the department but will have the effect of making the fee structure easier to navigate for our customers.

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