

# Board of Supervisors Development Process Committee

December 10, 2019

Government Center Conference Room 11

## ***Board of Supervisors (Board) Members Present:***

Sharon Bulova, Chairman  
Penelope Gross, Mason District (Vice Chairman)  
John Foust, Dranesville District  
Jeff McKay, Lee District  
Catherine Hudgins, Hunter Mill District  
Kathy Smith, Sully District (Committee Chair)  
Linda Smyth, Providence District  
Dan Storck, Mount Vernon District

The Development Process Committee (Committee) meeting was called to order at 11:12 a.m.

## **Public Facilities Manual (PFM) Phase 2 Update:**

Bill Hicks, Director, Land Development Services (LDS), introduced Danielle Badra, Management Analyst I, Site Code Research and Development Branch, Don Lacquement, Engineer IV, for the PFM Phase 2 presentation. Ellie Coddling was also present. Mr. Hicks took the opportunity to thank the members of the Engineering Standards Review Committee (ESRC) for the work that they do regarding the review and update of the technical standards of the PFM.

Ms. Badra, the engagement lead for the PFM project, provided a recap of the prior amendments, the coordination with the ESRC, and the outreach to residents, land development industry and county staff. Mr. Lacquement presented the technical changes moving forward as part of Phase 2 of the PFM related to streets, stormwater, wastewater, and trees and geotechnical requirements. Mr. Lacquement highlighted some of the changes, such as requiring “silt-tight” joints for storm sewers; clarifying shared-use paths when in the VDOT Right-of-Way; requiring elevated sanitary sewer manhole structures when located in wooded areas, eliminating concrete as an allowable material for sanitary sewers, and consideration of wider easements widths for deeper sanitary sewer installations; updates to Chapter 12 related to critical root zones; and adding provisions for residential basement floors to be set above the seasonal high groundwater table, with provisions to allow flexibility in response to comments from industry. Staff will continue vetting the amendments as they proceed with the amendments.

## **Appendix Q Amendment:**

Bill Hicks, Director, LDS, and Michael Peter, Manager, Financial Management Branch, LDS presented the Appendix Q amendment to modernize the structure of the fee schedule and make it clear, transparent and easy to understand.

Mr. Peter described the restructuring of fees for the building trade permits (electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and HVAC); elevator inspections; gateway plan review; and site plans and inspections to reflect the cost recovery model and to prepare for the implementation of the new Planning and Land Use System (PLUS).

Changes to the building trade permit fees will, among other things, focus on number of fixtures, rather than equipment size, to correspond with the amount of inspections, and making the changes now will ensure PLUS is programmed and ready at implementation. These changes will not, on average, change the permit costs paid for most commercial building projects.

The elevator program fee changes are to further LDS's robust inspection program, align fees to account for frequency and for major inspections and reflect changes in building design. It is anticipated there will be in a net increase in the fees paid per elevator.

The site inspections cost recovery philosophy has changed to reflect more complex projects on smaller sites. The new fee structure model will determine the fees as a percentage of calculated public improvement bonded amount, rather than a calculation based on the amount of land disturbance with additional amounts tabulated based on specifics of the proposed construction.

One area of plan increase, particularly with infill development, is with the urban forest management review and inspection. Urban foresters are spending more time on smaller plans, and as a result, the fees for all site plan types will increase.

A new program to speed overall plan review time is the creation of a new Gateway plan review. This will be an initial review of major plans (both site and building) to determine if the plan is complete and acceptable for a comprehensive review. The goal of the gateway review is to identify those plans that are of high quality and improve those that still need additional work, to improve the quality of all submissions so the high quality plans are not waiting in the queue behind those other plans that inevitably take more time during the review. This will ensure all plans get through the process as quickly as possible.

Supervisor McKay asked about the timing and predictability about the fee amount; tracking the total time the County has taken for the review of the plan; and would like a comparison chart of the proposed fee changes, and a means to measure the benefits. Mr. Peter said a chart of fee comparisons has been prepared and will be provided.

Supervisor Storck asked about the possibility of creating a list of statistics with respect to good or bad submitting firms for use by potential clients of such firms, and if the new system will have the ability to easily retrieve such data. Mr. Hicks stated that LDS has started considering a report card type approach, but our current systems cannot produce the data. We are requesting that such capability be incorporated into the new system that is under development or be achieved in another platform.

Discussion ensued regarding the quality of submitted plans, challenges with language and communication, and making sure the county helping the "little guys," e.g., the Homeowner's Associations or Places of Worship, who do not have the resources to hire dozens of consultants. There can be large complexities even on small plans and projects.

Staff will continue to reach out to external groups. Public hearings for the proposed Fee Schedule amendments are anticipated for the spring of 2020.

The Committee meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2020, at 11:00 a.m.