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March 27, 2012

Board of Supervisors
800 S. Victoria Ave.
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SUBJECT: Provide Direction to the Resource Management Agency to Implement Additional Measures to Improve Permit Processing and Implement a One-Time Late Fee Amnesty

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct the Resource Management Agency Director to implement additional measures to improve the processing of permits and implement a one-time late fee amnesty.

DISCUSSION:

County agencies have made significant strides in recent years in streamlining the County permit process, making the process more transparent and understandable, and more clearly identifying steps and costs.

I have been working with the Resource Management Agency Director regarding additional measures that could be implemented to further improve the permit process, facilitate clearing outstanding cases, and better inform applicants and the public. The Director has subsequently identified the following measures:

1. Authorize a one-time amnesty period to waive a portion of late fees for unpaid staff costs associated with gaining compliance in longstanding enforcement cases. This effort would not forgive the incurred enforcement costs, but rather would relieve the sometimes large late fees associated with enforcement cases and help to bring outstanding violations into compliance. The waiver would be implemented by the RMA Director upon the concurrence of County Counsel

2. Work to make the Development Review Committee process a standard requirement for significant projects, such as those that require the preparation of an EIR. This measure will further assure that County agencies identify potential significant issues that applicants should know about early in the process.
3. Direct staff to return to the Board with a work scope and budget for the development of Zoning Ordinance amendments related to the processing of wireless communication facility permits. Wireless communication facility permits are one of the most frequently processed permits yet the current guidelines, initially developed in the mid 1990's, were never codified and are out-of-date.
4. Prepare and distribute a one page "Billing Fact Sheet" to better inform applicants of the billing process. This simple measure would enable applicants to anticipate costs.
5. Continue efforts among all involved County agencies to improve the Initial Study preparation process (as noted in the recently-adopted Countywide Strategic Plan). While improvements have been made in recent years, the completion of Initial Studies remains a time consuming and costly component of discretionary permits and room for improvement remains.

The Resource Management Agency Director and I believe that implementation of these measures will help improve the County permit process and assist people with late fee balances bring their properties into compliance in an affordable manner.

Cordially,



Steve Bennett
Supervisor, First District