

NOTES
Mayor Swisstack's Transition Team
Development Team Meeting
Thursday, April 3, 2008
1:30 p.m. – City Hall 3rd Floor Fiscal Services

Bill Moore opened the meeting by having the team members introduce themselves. Ten of the thirteen team members were present. Ten residents attended.

The following areas were noted as doing well:

- city hall staff seem more accessible than before
- the inspections process has improved – keep the department funded to continue the good work
- staff is talented; reviews and information requests are timely
- summary plats turnaround time is good
- processing residential permits is good
- impact fee credits is equitable – keep this program in place

The following areas were noted as needing improvement:

- Development Process Manual {DPM} for residential and commercial development is lacking – this was mentioned as being a high priority. It's also important that the DPM not just be thrown together, but workable and used. Some developers have offered to help with the DPM.
- delay on plan review; improvement is needed as time varies by project; DPM would help streamline processes; Rio Rancho is slower than Santa Fe and most other cities in New Mexico
- delay in reviews in Public Works Department
- big disconnect between City Council's view being passed to Public Works and that department not "being onboard" is causing delays
- lack of a Master Plan {different from the 2020 Plan}

These comments made by Team members offer possible suggestions:

- set objectives for each department that are achievable; set effective attainment goals; Where is the city going?; can't rely on "pork" to fund projects – is there another way?
- bring an unbiased, outside consultant to review Development Services and Public Works processes and procedures and implement recommended changes
- Contact a City where these departments work well, if business-like, effective & efficient and use these as a model for benchmarks
- staff could benefit from Quality New Mexico; every staff member should be responsible for customer service

- increase fees and keep the funds in the Development or Public Works departments instead of depositing into General Fund {City Council would have to approve the change}

The following comments were made by the public:

- Can I member of the community check to see what's happening with a certain lot? lack of information and communication
- how developers interact with the city regarding available services and infrastructure is a concern; can this information be made available to the public
- notice of projects occurring in older neighborhoods is too short; more time needs to be given - change laws if necessary
- zoning laws are antiquated and need to be updated
- What is the vision for the city? What is the 2020 plan and where is it available? {copies are available in the public libraries, City Clerk's office and online at the city's website} Developers seem to have a different vision of Rio Rancho than the residents
- can impact fees and credits be tracked through various departments
- Home Builders Association members would be willing to pay higher fees if it could be guaranteed that the funds would not be placed into the General Fund, but rather designated funds for development/inspections/permitting

These items were also discussed by the Team:

- a process flowchart from Development Services would be helpful
- Team can address challenge of staff being able to deliver services consistently; a DPM is needed before staffing needs are known
- the Financial Team will be reviewing fee schedules from other cities to compare with Rio Rancho
- a DPM would streamline processes and would eliminate the need to "keep coming back because something wasn't done"
- City Council mandated that Development Services {as well as other departments} participate in Quality New Mexico
- what are people being hired to do; don't just ask for money to hire staff - be specific about what is needed
- what is the problem with Public Works; there's a lack of communication

Rob Anderson of Development Services made the following comments:

- DPM is in the process of being finalized, would be completed by the deadline date of June 30 for inspection on July 1. The DPM would then forwarded to the Governing Body for adoption
- some information requested by the public is proprietary and cannot be shared; also depending on what stage of development a lot is in will determine how much information is available

- a Capital Improvements schedule is available; he only has five planners and adding more to his staff would help with the backlog; approximately 26,000 permits are issued each year
- residents receive 15 days notice regarding zoning change requests and most residents will receive notice if they live within 300 feet of the property in question
- an increase in fees charged could increase services provided including possibly offering “same day” service
- Development Services would like to do “wholesale rezoning” and leave flexibility to developers; land choices need to be better planned
- if a DPM demands set target dates, then Development Services will need more staff to meet the deadlines

Meeting Schedule

PLEASE NOTE REVISIONS

Thursday, April 10th @ 1:30-3:00pm, RRR Chamber of Commerce
Wednesday, April 16th @ 1:30-3:00pm, RRR Chamber of Commerce
Friday, April 25 @ 1:00-2:30pm, RRR Chamber of Commerce