

**TOWN OF FAIRFAX  
STAFF REPORT**

**To: Mayor, Members of the Town Council**

**From: Michael Rock, Town Manager**   
**Jim Moore, Director of Planning & Building Services**

**Date: February 1, 2012**

**Subject: Informational Report on Operational Changes within the Department of Planning & Building Services**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Receive informational report on efforts to improve the operational efficiency of the Department of Planning & Building Services.

**BACKGROUND**

The Department of Planning & Building Services has been operating without administrative support for several years. Likewise, aside from the Planning Director there is only one other staff member, the Senior Planner, who manages entitlement applications with the Planning Commission and/or design review applications with the Design Review Board. In addition, the Building Official, who also reports to the Planning Director, has recently been assigned additional duties as the "Public Works Manager" – thereby diminishing his availability as Building Official.

**DISCUSSION**

Therefore, to improve the operations of the Department of Planning & Building Services staff intends to implement the following changes to work loads, front counter availability and clarification of public information that is provided by Town staff:

- (1) In order to provide staff with administrative support and to make better use the Senior Planner's role in permit review and processing, staff intends to recruit a part-time contract Zoning Technician / Administrative Assistant: to work morning hours four days a week for the remainder of the 2011/12 fiscal year.
- (2) In order to allow both the Senior Planner and the Building Official more time to focus on document review and/or preparation of reports (often required within a certain legally prescribed time period) and avoid "diversion of energy", staff intends to make their availability for consultations in afternoon hours at the public front counter – by appointment only.
- (3) In order to definitively explain to members of the public the role of Town staff in answering any Town Code / Zoning Ordinance questions at the front counter, on the telephone or within emails, and avoid any misunderstanding that may occur in doing so, staff intends to utilize the attached "Memorandum of Understanding" (Exhibit A).

## **FISCAL IMPACTS**

The part-time, contract Zoning Technician / Administrative Assistant position will entail approximately sixteen (16) hours of work a week at a rate of approximately \$25 dollars per hour without benefits: approximately \$1,600 dollars per month for the remainder of the 2011/12 FY. The person who fills this position will be an "at will" temporary part-time employee.

The current budget for the Department of Planning & Building Services has a provision for temporary employees: with an allocation of \$7,500 (to date, untapped) in the Planning Budget and a \$7,500 allocation (to date, only partially tapped) in the Building Inspection/Permits Budget.

It is anticipated that there will be a net savings to the Town's Budget by this part-time temporary hiring through the more efficient use of senior staff's time (i.e., the Town won't be paying the Planning Director, Senior Planner and/or Building Official to perform less skilled administrative tasks).

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Exhibit A – Memorandum of Understanding dated January 3, 2012

*Town of Fairfax*

# Memorandum of Understanding

**DATE:** January 3, 2012

**TO:** Town Residents, Business Owners and Members of the Public

**FROM:** James M. Moore, Director of Planning & Building Services



**SUBJECT:** Information and Advice Provided by Town Staff

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**Please note:** information and advice given by staff at the front counter, on the telephone, or via emails is a response to preliminary and/or general questions, and represents only a staff person's good faith interpretation of how applicable codes would apply to the facts presented as he or she understands them.

Such information should not be relied upon as a final determination from the Town, which can be obtained only after submission of a complete project application and its consideration by the appropriate reviewing body (e.g., Planning Commission, Design Review Board or Town Council) or official (e.g., Planning Director or Building Inspector) as is required by the Town Code for the particular permit being sought.

*Please sign and date this Memorandum of Understanding below verifying that you have read and acknowledge its provisions.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Home or Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Property of Interest in Fairfax: \_\_\_\_\_

*[Please print legibly]*

**EXHIBIT #**     **A**