

City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
April 12, 2016

ITEM TITLE:

Presentation on the Mobile Permit Service Program.

DEPARTMENT HEAD RECOMMENDATION:

Continue pilot program and assign dedicated staff to ensure its success in 2016/2017.

BRIEF HISTORY:

The Mobile Permit Service Program is a staff-initiated effort led by Mr. Dayron Garcia, Plans Processor Lead, and Mr. Jorge Pino, Plans Processor, to provide remote permit counter assistance free of charge to residents unable to visit City Hall to file their paperwork. The Program was also proposed in response to the Building Permit Focus Group meetings as a way to increase community outreach and fast track simple permit activities. The Program also assists in closing out open permits, some dating back many years, which are resolved as a part of the service. With the City Manager’s support, the concept gained momentum as staff met and discussed ways to formalize the activity. The service has now been “road tested” on 35 projects by referrals with much success. (See Exhibit A – *Mobile Permit Service Tracking Sheet*)

The Development Services Department views this program as a great opportunity to improve customer care and provide special assistance to our most needy residents, while bringing construction projects into compliance with City codes and regulations. In conjunction with the Ombudsman Permit Liaison in the City Manager’s Office, staff views these services as a higher level of service to our permit customers. In each of the 35 cases staff has been involved with, the personal interaction with the customer has been overwhelmingly encouraging, changing the permitting experience paradigm from a stressful and confusing one to a rewarding and positive one.

The preliminary parameters established for the program are as follows:

Eligible Participants:

- Our targeted audience consists of elderly (65 years old and over) or disabled residents.
- Special accommodations would also be made for residents who may have transportation restrictions such as care providers unable to leave their patients or children.
- Hardship cases under the Victim Assistance Program.
- Referrals from the City Manager’s Office or Elected Officials.
- The MacFarlane Historic Neighborhood.

The Mobile Permit Service is not meant to replace the normal working relationship between property owners, designers and contractors. In most cases, the building professionals are responsible for developing design documents and filing for building permits under their service contracts. This is especially true for more complex projects such as new construction or major additions.

With that in mind, the Mobile Permit Service will be limited to the following project types, with exceptions being made on a case by case basis:

Eligible Permit Types:


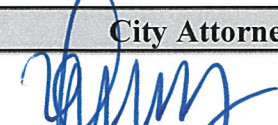
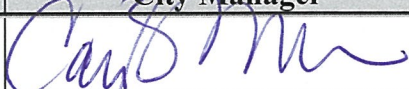
- Kitchen and bathroom renovations;
- Replacement in-kind like windows and doors;
- Replacement of interior finishes such as flooring, drywall and ceiling materials; and
- General maintenance such as power washing, painting and landscaping.

The standard operating procedures for the Mobile Permit Service are still in development along with the requirements for staffing and other resources. To date, work has been performed on a part-time basis by existing Building staff. With additional exposure, public outreach and referrals, the service is expected to generate enough demand to support a dedicated full-time position. In addition, a new electric vehicle will be dedicated for the Program that will have the City logos and branding program message.

PUBLIC OUTREACH:

| Date | Form of Notification | Comments |
|-----------|--|--|
| 1/25/2016 | Letty Ellis, Adult Activities Coordinator | Introduced the Program. |
| 2/17/2016 | Code Enforcement Board | Introduced the Program. Board recommended program expansion beyond trial period. |
| 2/25/2016 | MacFarlane Neighborhood | Introduced the Program. |
| 2/26/2016 | Chamber of Commerce Realtor Showcase | Introduced the Program. |
| 3/31/2016 | Business Improvement Dis. Retail Brokers Forum | Introduced the Program. |
| 4/6/2016 | Disability Advisory Board | Introduced the Program. |

APPROVED BY:

| Department Director | City Attorney | City Manager |
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ATTACHMENT(S):

Exhibit A – Mobile Permit Service Tracking Sheet