

Business Friendly Task Force 2010

The Task Force that was appointed by the City Council to review the building and development processes in order to help make the actions of the Building Dept, Planning Dept., Engineering Dept. and the Planning and Zoning Board more business friendly. Outline below are some of the suggestions of the Task Force and the responses of the City.

1. Assign a project coordinator or mentor for each development and/or building project.

This is an excellent idea. The City can and will assign a lead staff contact for each large scale Building, Site Plan and Subdivision development submittal. For the building projects that do not require P&Z submittal (residential permits), the building official will be the lead staff contact. For the Site Plan and Subdivision Submittals, for the time being, the Public Works Director will be the lead contact. When and/or if a Community Development Dept. Head is hired, that person will take the lead with the public for Site Plan and Subdivision Submittals. In both cases the lead contact will guide individuals through the City processes. Small scale projects are too numerous to assign a single lead contact person, but all building and planning staff members will make themselves available to guide individuals through the application and construction process. It is the expectation however, that the ultimate development and completion of a Site Plan/Plat/Subdivision is the responsibility of the applicant and their professionally hired designer to meet the Code and Ordinance requirements.

2. Develop a tracking system for activity with clients (similar to utility billing).

This is also a great idea! The City feels that with a lead contact person assisting with the application processes, projects will be better tracked. The software used by the Administration Staff for billing is not currently available to the Engineering/Building Staff and is tied to an established database of utilities. However, the City is reviewing software that will further assist in tracking activity.

3. Decisions made and actions taken should be in writing. This is a logical and good process for all to follow. As often as possible, all decisions relative to large scale projects, subdivisions, and site plans are all, at present, completed in writing. In the future, when meeting with clients, the City will communicate what anecdotal information we can provide and be clearer with clients that if a written response is desired then a formal project submittal is required.

4. Revise the process for approval of "Preliminary Plats". The City staff will endeavor to do a better job of communicating the existence of the existing Conceptual Platting process. The City staff will review with the P&Z and the City Council the existing Platting requirements to determine if additional changes to the Ordinance are warranted. The Platting Process for a PUD is the most complex, but has been structured to provide the most amount of flexibility to the developer after process through a Public Hearing.

5. Create a Review or Appeal Committee. By Ordinance and State Statute, the P&Z Board serves as the appellate role. The Mayor and Council agree that there are other alternatives, and are researching what alternatives are feasible and can be implemented. Because this will involve changing ordinances, this concern may take some time to fully address. Therefore, because the

Mayor and Council wanted to provide closure for the rest of the concerns, we will continue to research this and bring some suggestions and alternatives to the Business Friendly Task Force at a later date.

6. **Peer Review of the Process.** The Council receives on a monthly basis a spread sheet that outlines on a Ward by Ward basis all building permits. This information is supplied to the Council to enable them to complete an informal review with customers. The Mayor and Council are prepared to take an active role in addressing any concerns voiced by the public. The Mayor and Council will use the "Scorecard" or Satisfaction Survey to assist them in determining who might/should be contacted for follow-up.
7. **Develop a Final "Scorecard" for Projects.** A draft customer satisfaction survey form has been created. The draft form has been reviewed by the Business Friendly Task Force and the final form should be available by the end of March, 2010. If the satisfaction survey indicates areas of concern, the Council will address the concerns with the City Administrator and he/she will follow-up with the staff.

Recognition of the Financial Impact of Decisions

1. **Have project requirements fully listed in the beginning of the project.**

What the City can offer is a lead contact person as addressed previously. This lead contact person will be available for a scheduled meeting to sit down with prospective applicants to outline City processes, check lists, and key issues.

2. **Consolidate the fee schedule** – the fee schedule, as it exists, was developed to allow the most amount of flexibility to the builders and developers. The fee schedule could be consolidated on a case by case basis. The request to do so could be explored at the "lead contact" meeting.

The City Needs to Adopt a Pro-Development Attitude

1. **Staff needs to begin asking, "How can we make this work?" during the initial contact with the client.** Staffs are working to be more accountable from the beginning of the City process through to the end of the City process. Since the preliminary meeting with the Business Friendly Task Force, the staff has begun asking more questions geared toward moving forward the customer's project/agenda.
2. **All City Staff are not policemen.** The City agrees. Staff will endeavor to do a better job of highlighting challenges in a more positive way and suggest ways to meet the code and ordinances
3. **Customer Service** – The City provides customer service training to our employees. The Customer Satisfaction surveys "Scorecard" process will further assist in getting people trained to be open, friendly and accommodating.
4. **Accountability** – A large number of citizens were concerned that if a complaint was issued, the result would be retribution by staff. The City Administrator, Mayor and Council are all equally concerned about this perception. Any staff member that is found to be less than professional or

utilizing any kind of retributive process will be held accountable. The "Satisfaction Survey" listed above should help people feel more comfortable in lodging concerns without being specifically mentioned by name to the staff. The Satisfaction Survey will be delivered directly to the Mayor and Council.

5. **Liaison Committee** – the Council has formed a liaison committee consisting of three members of the Council to hear and address customer concerns with Public Works and to facilitate communication with Public Works.

Planning and Zoning Board

1. **Limit the decisions of the P&Z to strictly those matters which the P&Z Board has authority.** The City agrees with this statement. The P&Z Board agrees that they only want to act on those issues over which they have purview. The P&Z Board does however, have a very broad spectrum of areas of responsibility. The Mayor scheduled a preliminary with the City Attorney and the P&Z Board to go over their areas of responsibility. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled soon to further refine their areas of responsibility.
2. **The application process for P&Z should have a qualifications process or at a minimum, relevant experience to insure that those seated have knowledge which represents the community's interest.** The P&Z Board members are appointed by the City Council. An open application process for every open seat is utilized by the Council where members of the public are invited and encouraged to apply to sit on what is a labor intensive volunteer board. At present, the Board has a banker, a developer/business person, a realtor, a plans preparer, an office manager, a motel owner and a lifelong Cody resident with a more youthful perspective.
3. **A training program for all P&Z members should be part of the orientation such that new members understanding the roles and responsibilities of board members.** The Mayor and Council agree! While there was a training program previously and members of the Board are asked to become members of WYO PASS. WYOPASS holds a training every spring for P&Z Board members from across the State. Further, the Mayor has asked the City Attorney to schedule a time to go over the various aspects of the job, job duties and the diligence required to be ready for a meeting.
4. **Legal Representation. P&Z meetings should have legal counsel present who is instructed to stop actions which are beyond the scope of the P&Z's authority.** – The City Attorney or a representative from his/her office now attends all P&Z Board Meeting.
5. **City-County Interface. A discussion with the county of the city-county interface area is needed. Currently developers are choosing not to work within this zone because of uncertainty on the administration of the regulations.** The County/City interface area is somewhat complex, but the administration of the regulations is very clear. The City and County have joint review of this area and Section 30-6 of the subdivision regulations spell out the criteria to be met. The City has had several conversations with the County about this issue and has requested a joint City/County P&Z meeting. To date, we have not been able to accommodate one-another. The Council and the P&Z Board will be further reviewing our existing regulations to see if there are modifications that are in the best interest of all involved.