

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

September 16, 2010

On June 11, 2010, a group of Development Process Practitioners, which included: George Austin, Tom Bergamini, Kris Euclide, Alan Fish, Hank Gempeler, Susan Schmitz, R. Richard Wagner, Bill White and Tripp Widder, presented a series of recommended changes to the City of Madison Development Approval Process. Since the time of that report, the Group has added Larry Nelson, former Engineer for the City of Madison and said good bye to Natalie Bock Erdman who has become the City's Community Development Authority Director.

In subsequent meetings, the Development Approval Process Group believes that there are a series of implementation steps which the City may undertake now to improve, streamline and make more positive the development approval process undertaken by various City departments, boards, agencies and commissions. This is not in lieu of any ordinance changes, but do present immediate opportunities for favorable presentation of the City's many diverse strengths to developers and citizens who wish to invest in the City of Madison. In no particular order, these implementation steps include:

1. **Positive Attitude Is The Most Important Thing.** The need for a top-down attitude adjustment remains paramount. A culture of welcoming to investors should be part and parcel of the approach undertaken by each member of each department, board, agency, and commission. Training of staff members to the boards, commissions and agencies may be implemented through the existing executive agency structure. The training would include defining missions, the process and objectives of each department, board, agency and committee and how to "welcome" applicants.
2. **Metrics Can Be Established Administratively.** Each department, board, agency and commission, should develop metrics for successful implementation of their mission in the year to come and provide a retrospective review of how effective those goals were achieved were during the prior year. Metrics should include the time and expense devoted to the pre-application process and procedure, i.e., neighborhood development process, time spent with the Development Assistance Team, neighborhood groups and other relevant agencies prior to the actual submission of a development request.
3. **Neighborhood Groups Should Be Empowered.** Currently, the ordinances require notification to neighborhood groups but there is not requirement that the neighborhood groups, in turn, assemble, notify and educate their residents and property owners of a development proposal. The opportunity for advance notification should be accompanied by the responsibility for further notification, education and constructive feedback to the neighborhood. The City should support neighborhood associations through training of, or provision of, facilitators for neighborhood meetings to make sure that the associations are able to control the information process within their neighborhood and to have effective input into the development process. Alders should be allocated sufficient funds through the budget process to notify residents, property owners, and other stakeholders of development proposals in their areas.
4. **Conditions Of Approval Should Be Identified Earlier.** Currently, proposed conditions of approval are revealed on Friday for a Monday Plan Commission meeting. This leaves virtually no time to sort out, sift and winnow those conditions which may be either unattainable, unrealistic or unwise. Conditions of approval should be vetted at high

levels within the departments and provided to applicants a week in advance so that issues can be professionally resolved at the earliest possible time.

5. **Economic Impacts Need To Be Identified.** Currently, the issues of whether a particular development is either a “plus” or a “minus” within the City infrastructure or social service field is not identified. Potential economic impacts through job creation and the like should be identified at the earliest possible time. In addition, any development which is exempt from property taxes should be identified to assure the proper balance between exempt and nonexempt properties within the City.
6. **Comparable Metrics Should Be Established.** The City, through its Comptroller, should annually identify the value of new construction within the City as compared to that in immediate outlying communities to determine whether or not economic development is growing away from the City. Such measurements should include not only the value and cost of development, but also traffic counts and the location of new commercial and employment based development. In addition, an effort should be made to identify the total cost of developing a project in the City of Madison instead of in the surrounding communities for example, DeForest, Waunakee, Middleton, Verona, Fitchburg, Sun Prairie or Cottage Grove. Such information could be gained directly from applicants as well as from lobbying reports, park fees and other impact fees paid.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the Group continues to feel that the City of Madison has the vibrancy and requisite strengths to continue its path of positive economic development. However, challenges exist and the City of Madison should promptly take immediate action to set a positive course in a positive direction. This action is in addition to, and not in lieu of, ordinance amendments.