

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Tom Harmer, Town Manager

From: Allen Parsons, AICP
Director, Planning, Zoning and Building Department

Report date: August 5, 2022

Meeting date: September 12, 2022

Subject: Resolution 2022-20, Amending Building Permit and Fire Fees

Recommended Action

Pass Resolution 2022-20.

Background

The Town of Longboat Key's (Town's) Planning, Zoning & Building Department and Fire Marshal are responsible for overseeing the effective, efficient, fair, and safe enforcement of the Town's Building, Housing, Plumbing, Electrical, Mechanical, and Life/Safety Codes. The permitting and inspection processes provide assurance that buildings and structures in the Town have been reviewed and inspected for compliance with the applicable building and life/safety Codes, the Town's ordinances, along with environmental and flood protection requirements. The Town's building permitting program helps to ensure that all structures and buildings within the Town are safe for residents and visitors to inhabit. The application of construction standards, gives building occupants the best chance to avoid fire, structural failure, or something as simple as a child getting their head caught between stair posts. A building permit is required for new construction, renovations, the installation of heating and cooling systems, plumbing and/or electrical work. The permitting and inspection work is primarily performed by the Building Division, which operates as an "Enterprise Fund and operates based on the revenues earned by the fees paid by users.

One of the elements incorporated into the existing Building/Fire Fees Resolution is an option, at the Commission's discretion, to annually adjust, each October 1st, the Town's permit and inspection fees. The fee increase, or decrease is allowed to be indexed to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), or based on the annual percentage change in the operating expenses in the Building Enterprise Fund to avoid periodic jumps in fees. Such potential increases, or decreases are brought to the Commission annually for consideration. Staff is not recommending an increase to any of the existing fees and are taking the opportunity to recommend a number of decreases to existing fees, and add several new fees as described further below.

The proposals include several fee reductions, in part to address an increase in the Building Fund Reserves due to abnormally large construction projects, such as the St. Regis. Proposed reductions will have the added benefit of providing relief to property owners and their contractors.

In addition, reduced fees are proposed for the utilization of video inspections, which are currently allowed for air conditioning systems and water heater installations. The use of

video inspections is a benefit to property owners and contractors in that inspection scheduling logistics with Town staff are eliminated, along with reduced staff time associated with travel to-and-from construction sites. Based on those efficiencies, the reduced effort by the Town supports a fee reduction for those activities that can be reviewed and approved by video.

Three new fees are proposed to recognize specific categories of review including pool barriers, electric charging systems and the review of structural assessments. Staff has also taken the opportunity to provide non-substantive edits that provide for consistency of terminology and formatting.

The proposed changes are described below and are in the order found in Resolution 2022-20:

- A fee reduction to the standard Building Permit application type. The fee is reduced from \$3.00 per square foot to \$2.50 per square foot. (Building Permitting Fees #2).
- A new, separate and lower-cost fee to reflect staff time associated with review and inspection of pool barrier fences. (Building Permitting Fees #10).
- Elimination of the threshold (> \$2,500) where additional fees (of \$12 per each \$1,000 in construction value) are currently applied to solar systems (electric or water) installations. (Building Permitting Fees #23).
- Elimination of the threshold (> \$2,000) where additional fees (of \$12 per each \$1,000 in construction value) are currently applied to permanent freestanding signs. (Building Permitting Fees #25).
- Revising the threshold (from \$5,000 to \$30,000) where additional fees (of \$12 per each \$1,000 of construction value) would be applied to concrete repair work. (Building Permitting Fees #29).
- Revising the threshold (from \$3,500 to \$5,000) where additional fees (of \$12 per each \$1,000 of construction value) would be applied to the category of when 5 or more windows/doors are proposed. (Building Permitting Fees #32).
- Revising the threshold (from \$3,500 to \$5,000) where additional fees (of \$12 per each \$1,000 of construction value) would be applied to the permitting of handrails. (Building Permitting Fees #36).
- Revising the threshold (from \$3,500 to \$5,000) where additional fees (of \$12 per each \$1,000 of construction value) would be applied to the category of building permits that don't fit into another category and the permit cannot be evaluated on a square footage basis. (Building Permitting Fees #37).
- Adding a fee (\$500) for the review of structural assessments, required to be conducted by licensed structural engineers or architects, of condominiums that are 25 years or older and greater than 3-stories in height. This is a new requirement that was passed by the Florida Legislature this past legislative session and becomes effective by the end of 2024. (Building Official Administrative Services #15).

- A fee reduction to the Heating, Air Conditioning, Refrigeration, Ventilation, and Electrical (HARVE) permitting for new construction. The fee is reduced from \$0.05 per square foot to \$0.03 per square foot. (HARVE Permitting Fees #1).
- A new reduced-cost fee for air conditioning change outs that utilize video-inspections. The cost for this proposed permit type would be \$75 compared to \$150 for a permit that includes in-person inspections. (HARVE Permitting Fees #5).
- Creation of a fee that specifically references electric charging systems. This type of work has been done as an electric permit. The separately named fee is in recognition of the increasing number of these systems that are anticipated in the years ahead. The proposed cost (\$150) is the same as other electric permits. (HARVE Permitting Fees #15).
- A fee reduction to the plumbing permit for new construction. The fee is reduced from \$0.05 per square foot to \$0.03 per square foot. (Plumbing Permitting Fees #1).
- A new reduced-cost fee is for water heaters that utilize video-inspections. The cost for this proposed permit type would be \$45 compared to \$90 for a permit that includes in-person inspections. (Plumbing Permitting Fees #4).
- A fee reduction (from \$115 to \$85) for a backflow preventer permit (Plumbing Permitting Fees #8).
- A fee reduction (from \$115 to \$85) for a new water service permit (Plumbing Permitting Fees #10).
- A fee reduction (from \$115 to \$85) for a sewer service permit (Plumbing Permitting Fees #10).
- A new fee (\$85) for the review of dredging permits (no existing fee is included in the Building/Fire Fees resolution). (Shoreline Construction Code Permit Fees #1d).

Staff provided notice of the proposed changes to approximately 1,550 contractors that are currently registered with the Town. The Town has received no expressions of concern or other feedback on the proposed changes.

Staff Recommendation

Pass Resolution 2022-20.

Attachments

- A. Resolution 2022-20, Updating Building Permit and Fire Fees (Available in Town Clerk's Office)
- B. PowerPoint Presentation (Available in Town Clerk's Office)

End of Agenda Item