

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Howard Tipton, Town Manager

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

Report Date: September 10, 2024

Meeting Date: October 7, 2024

Subject: Resolution 2024-18, Amending Building Permit and Fire Fees

Recommended Action

Pass Resolution 2024-18.

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, Zoning, Shoreline Construction, Dredge and Fill, Subdivision 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," which is funded based on the revenues earned by the fees that are paid by users of the plans review and inspection services.

One of the elements incorporated into the existing Building/Fire Fees Resolution is an option, at the Commission's discretion, to adjust annually 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. Both construction costs and inflation have increased improvement costs to Town property owners over the past few years post-Covid. Staff does not want to add unnecessary costs to those increases. In addition, the Building Fund has sufficient reserves, which have allowed the Town to make strategic customer service-enhancing investments, such as transitioning

to a new permitting system that will provide more efficient online permitting and transparency to the public.

Staff is, however, taking the opportunity to recommend a number of updates to the Planning, Zoning, Building and Fire Fees, as described further below.

The proposals include: a number of clarifications that will make it clearer for customers to know what fees will apply based on the work proposed; some consolidations of similar permit types; a number of fee reductions; and a limited number of fee increases intended to deter work outside the scope of a permit or work that causes damage (e.g. Stop Work Orders), to reflect typical staff time (e.g. Building Official Letters of Determination or Appeals), or to more accurately reflect the administrative costs of monitoring Private Provider Plan Review and Inspection services and reports.

One of the more significant changes is associated with an overall ongoing goal of streamlining the permitting process. The introduction of Master Building application will revise the Town's building permit for new construction, additions and alterations that will reduce a customer's need to apply for up to five separate permits for example, a new residential single-family residence, down to a single master permit, with subcontractors listed under and as a part of that permit.

There are several benefits associated with this approach including: streamlining the review that all subcontractors' licenses and insurance are verified prior to the master permit issuance; reducing potential unpermitted work when subcontractors' permits are applied for separately; and having all applicable inspections listed under one master permit, which can save a significant amount of time and money as well as expedite the overall permitting process.

A chart with the proposed changes to the adopted fee schedule included in Resolution 2024-18 is available from the Town Clerk's Office.

Resolution 2024-18 has an effective date for implementation on April 1, 2025, to allow time for staff to complete the implementation of the Town's new permitting system (which is anticipated for early 2025) and to allow time to provide notice to contractors of pending changes.

Staff Recommendation

Pass Resolution 2024-18.

Attachments

Resolution 2024-18 (Available in Town Clerk's Office)

End of Agenda Item