

City of Molalla

City Council Meeting



Agenda Category: Ordinances & Resolutions

Staff Report – Resolution 2021-02

Subject: Zoning Letter Fee Resolution

Recommendation: Adopt

Date of Meeting to be Presented: January 13, 2021

Fiscal Impact:

When I arrived to the City of Molalla, Planning Staff was spending approximately 10 hours per week (8 Planner, 2 Support) fielding and responding to a variety of development related inquiries. Over a full year this is approximately 520 hours of staff time, or ¼ of a full-time employee, or \$20,000 of taxpayer money.

The proposed \$75 per letter fee would recoup nearly all those costs, and ensure the cost of development speculation is not passed on to the tax base at large.

Background:

As part of my initial Planning Department Audit I aimed to identify, and begin to cure, significant departmental pain points that ultimately contribute to inefficient use of resources and poor customer interface. One of the pain points I identified was the lack of a coherent process and appropriate financial recuperation for complex development related inquiries.

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SUBMITTED BY: Mac Corthell, Planning Director
APPROVED BY: Dan Huff, City Manager

Background Continued:

Development related inquiries are inherently complex, this is one of the reasons they are made despite all the relevant information being available in the Development Code, which is fully accessible on the city's website.

The cost of development related staff work should not be passed on to the local tax base. These actions are undertaken by individuals either for profit, or for their own personal benefit.

Many speculators, such as finance companies, require an official letter from the city in order to conduct their business. Such letters require special attention based on the tenets of professionalism, and the risk associated.

Staff reviewed the Zoning and Land Use Letter fees of multiple other cities and found them to range in cost from \$50 - \$150, however those with the \$50 fee typically do not offer as much information as others.

The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed resolution and recommended approval at the December 9, 2020 Planning Commission meeting.

With those principles in mind, Planning Department Staff has taken the following actions:

1. **First Issue** – lack of a coherent process for potential developers, purchasers, owners, and speculators, to gain information on a particular property.
 - a. **Cured** – Administrative development and implementation of a Land Use and Zoning Letter (attached).
2. **Second Issue** – ensure the costs for development, and speculation, are placed on the individual who stands to benefit, not on the tax base at large. Development related inquiries typically require 1-2 staff hours to field,
 - a. **Proposed Cure** – Implementation of a \$75 per letter, per parcel fee for development related inquiries as outlined in the Land Use and Zoning Letter attached.
 - b. **Inquiries Not Subject to the Fee**
 - i. Planning Staff will determine whether a residential inquiry will take 30 minutes or less to resolve. If so, there is no charge and Planning Staff will provide a direct response without process.
 - ii. Inquiries regarding process (e.g. What do I do if I want to build an accessory dwelling unit?)

Recommended Motion: I move the Molalla City Council adopt Resolution 2021-02 Authorizing a Land Use and Zoning Letter Fee.