

Building Permits

Last Monday I was quoted in the Mt. Democrat in regards to the recommendations being made by the independent consultant that has been hired by the county to sort out our permit process problems. The article mentioned that I am an Independent Plan Processor. I'm actually a designer that has become a plan processor in order to help my clients get their plans through the county. Last year the combined Building/Planning Department was asking to increase fees. A few people, including myself, stood up and stated poor service should not be rewarded with increased fees. The Board asked the Development Service Department to meet with the BIAC (Building Industry Advisory Committee) to try and resolve the problems. I attended those meetings. The Building Industry devised a list of recommendations last June to improve the process. After this the meetings morphed into something else.

The original purpose of the BIAC was for the County Building Official to meet with local builders to discuss issues and run ideas by them. Local builders are no longer the majority in attendance. At these meetings fast tracking and economical development continue to be the main subject. That has been the main issue of the representative of the Sacramento Builder's Exchange. Translation; for extra money large development projects take priority over smaller projects. Instead of focusing on the process that could make the permit process work, fast tracking and economical development again are the priority. There are only a few plan checkers that actually review plans so I'm not sure why this issue keeps coming up. For fast tracking to happen, small projects like mine would have to be put on the back burner.

Out of the blue the county hired an independent consultant to not only come up with solutions to fix our county process problem, but also to be the Interim Assistant Chief Administrative Officer over Development Services. His 2 main recommendations are: one, push through the 208 discretionary projects (those that don't follow the zoning ordinances), by hiring more planners; and to combine D.O.T. (which functions at this time) into the presently combined Building/Planning Department and hiring a Director - a planner - to manage these 3 departments.

That manager/director will have power to direct our county development as he/she pleases. I don't agree with this. I asked that they split the Building and Planning departments back into their original functions and then hold those department heads responsible if that department is not functioning. I would also like to see the function of Site Review for commercial plans moved back into D.O.T. and out of the Building Department.

I am tired of the county hiring consultants and managers from outside of the area. It would be nice to again work with someone that is invested in this county.

Most of the recommendations, reorganization and development that are about to take place are not going to help the local builder, local companies, or the community.

I have been trying to represent Joe Public. Mainly, the Joe Public that lives in this county. I'm inviting Joe Public to attend the next Board meeting where this is being addressed. The meeting will be in the Board of Supervisors Room on Tuesday, May 13 and 2:00 p.m.

I'm not getting paid to do this and it's been taking a great toll on my business and my family. I can't continue on much longer so I'm asking Joe Public to show up at this meeting and let the Board know who you are and what you care about.

Thanks,
Sue Taylor