

Flow Charts for Planning and Zoning Actions

Packet Synopsis

Good and understandable communications with your customer is an essential for any enterprise whether it is a for-profit private enterprise or a non-profit or governmental service agency such as a community's planning and zoning staff and commission. For happy and satisfied customers make supportive citizen of the community's planning and zoning efforts. It can also engender other positive results including positive community economic and social development. People like to do business where they feel that they are wanted and where they have positive experiences.

Interpreting the content and requirements of zoning or subdivision ordinances such as how to meet building permit requirements and so forth or essentially "what must I do" to be certain of getting my building permit or my subdivision proposal approved, a change of zoning request or a conditional use permit for example requires understandable instructions. Unfortunately, many printed instructions or are perfunctory at best and often not very clear.

Three samples of what we judge are good guides are enclosed with this packet. These are:

Jefferson County Kentucky Developers Guide – This is a very complete and sophisticated, but fun guide – using cartoons to make its various points. It contains the process review and approval paths for many various planning and zoning actions. It covers the "waterfront". The needs of your community or its zoning and land use issues may not be as detailed and extensive as those being addressed by Jefferson County, but just reviewing it will give you a good check list for what you should include in your informational materials and guides.

Town Hall South Handbook; Planning & Development Application Processes, Gilford, Connecticut – This is the guide for a New England town, which unlike our townships are sub-geographic civil jurisdiction encompassing both urban and rural development. It not only presents various process flow charts for various planning and zoning activities but also has a "principles" or mission statement, an overview of the application process and also a fee schedule of the required fees.

City of Novi Development Review Guide – This is again a very comprehensive but understandable guide for individual development actions in this Michigan city. It outlines the step-by-step process for the various land use scenarios and, where appropriate, references the specific city ordinance section or sections that are governing. It has a matrix showing various uses and where they are or are not permitted or require special conditions. It also has a development review process matrix which can be most helpful.

The common element in all three of the enclosed samples is that they are clear and unambiguous.