

# **PRESS RELEASE**

February 18, 2010

## **FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION**

Mayor Tom Taylor announced today a series of significant administrative changes within the Planning Department and other City departments intended to improve the development review process. The changes all fall within the scope of the Mayor's executive authority as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of City operations. The changes are intended to provide a head start for the Mayoral Ad Hoc Development Process Review Committee which was recently established by the Common Council.

On January 19, 2010, the Common Council authorized the creation of a Mayoral Ad Hoc Development Process Review Committee to determine if "there exist more efficient and expedient means of land use proposal reviews." The Committee, comprised of the Mayor, an Alderman, three local developers, a Planning Commission, Environmental Commission, and Economic Development Commission member, and staff, is scheduled to have its first meeting Thursday, February 18, at 5:00 p.m. in the Hearing Room at the Franklin City Hall at 9229 W. Loomis Road.

Following establishment of the Committee, Mayor Taylor directed staff to prepare a list of ideas and recommendations that could be provided to and considered by the Committee at their initial meeting. Acting within his discretionary, executive authority, Mayor Taylor has directed staff to implement the following ideas immediately so as to more quickly achieve the Common Council's intent when it established the Committee.

- Establish a multi-department Development Review Team to provide developers with clear and concise guidance when heading into the formal development review process. This new staff commitment will function as a one-stop-shop for the pre-application process and will provide developers more timely and comprehensive staff input on their development concepts.
- Reduce the initial staff review period following formal submission from the current up to four weeks to generally only two weeks, thereby eliminating as much as two weeks from the review process.
- Increase developer flexibility and discretion by requiring only one round of staff review and comments prior to board or commission approval meetings. Additional staff review rounds will be at the developer's discretion.
- Streamline staff reports to eliminate duplication with approval resolutions, while providing more details and clarity to ensure ease of compliance.
- Implement a "Post Approval Checklist" practice that provides developers, within one week following board/commission approval, with clear, written guidance on all remaining steps, conditions, and timelines.
- Developing a Land Development Guide and a Design Manual to provide developers with a clearer understanding of the processes, procedures, and expectations for development within Franklin.

Mayor Taylor noted that these immediate changes exemplify the City of Franklin's commitment toward improving the development approval process and continuing to enhance the City's strong business environment. Mayor Taylor also indicated his confidence that the Mayoral Ad Hoc Development Process Review Committee would identify additional ideas, recommendations, and solutions that the Common Council could consider to further enhance the economic development environment in Franklin.

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