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DEPARTMENT OF FIRE & PUBLIC SAFETY
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KAHULUI, MAUI, HAWAII 96732
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January 30, 2024

The Honorable Richard T. Bissen, Jr.
Mayor, County of Maui
200 South High Street
Wailuku, HI 96793

APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL


Mayor Date

For Transmittal to:

The Honorable Tom Cook, Chair
Water and Infrastructure Committee
Maui County Council
200 South High Street
Wailuku, HI 96793

Dear Chair Cook,

SUBJECT: COUNTY PERMIT PROCESSING EFFICIENCIES (WAI-1(16))

The Department of Fire & Public Safety is in receipt of your letter dated January 17, 2024. Please see responses provided by the Fire Prevention Bureau below.

1. For Fiscal Year ("FY") 2018 through 2023:

a. How many residential permit applications did the Department receive each fiscal year?

The Department's Plan Reviewers are responsible for reviewing residential and commercial buildings, as well as subdivisions and event permits.

Under the current code, the first and second dwellings on the county water meter are exempt from fire department's review. The fire department reviews the third and fourth dwellings, dwellings larger than 5,000 sq. ft., and dwellings on private water systems.

The figures below are the number of residential applications that were received by our department.

FY 2018: 385

FY 2019: 374

FY 2020: 419

FY 2021: 434

FY 2022: 527* (419 through March 31, 2022 (KIVA), 108 from April 1, 2022 – June 30, 2022 (MAPPS))

FY 2023: 453

- b. How many residential permit applications did the Department process each fiscal year?

Currently, we only review residential permits that have three or more dwellings and dwellings larger than 5,000 sq. ft. In the future we may want to look at all residential permits without subdivision approval.

The Department is currently looking at a way to identify subdivisions that has been approved by the fire department for access and water supply requirements. Once identified, this could allow us to approve residential permits right away.

2. Of the Department's overall vacancy rate, what are the staffing levels for the positions directly involved in the residential permit review process?

Currently, there are no vacancies in our Plans Review section. However, there is a possibility of losing two plan reviewers due to promotions or retirement. This would slow our review process as we would need to hire and train new personnel.

3. If staffing levels were increased to improve the residential permit review process, how many of each type of position would be needed and to what programs would they be added?

In November 2020, we increased the number of Plans Reviewers from two to three. In December 2022, we added one more to have a total of four plan reviewers. This fiscal year, a second Captain will be added to help with plan review management. Until all personnel are trained and in place, we will not know if more reviewers are needed.

4. What are the Department's top three challenges to processing residential permit applications? How is Department resolving these issues?

Our Plan Reviewers do more than just plan review. They also have other responsibilities that take time away from their plan review, for example, fire investigations, mandatory medical training, code amendments, and construction meetings. The department is in the process of hiring a second Fire Captain for the Fire Prevention Bureau for plans review management which should alleviate some of the requested pre-construction meetings that they attend. The Fire Captain will also be responsible for code amendment review and changes.

Varying fire flows required for residential fire protection: 1) establishing communication with Department of Water Supply through MAPPs or emails verifying that information, and 2) trying to verify the fire flow information is available to applicants.

Site plans come in with information missing which delay the permit until we have the information that we need. We continue to educate applicants and architects on what we would like them to provide on their plans. We need to update our requirements with DSA and provide them with a requirement sheet.

5. For the FY 2025 Budget, would the goal and objective of increasing the Department's overall permit processing efficiency be a priority the Department could consider in its Key Activity Goals & Measures? If yes, what steps are being taken to effectuate this? If no, please explain why not.

We are always trying to find ways to increase the efficiency of our review. Whether by training or evaluating our current processes and making changes. Once the second Fire Captain in place and new plans reviewers are in trained there should be an increase in efficiency.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Office of the Fire Chief at (808) 270-7561.

Sincerely,



BRADFORD K. VENTURA
Fire Chief

WAI Committee

From: Michelle Santos <Michelle.Santos@co.maui.hi.us>
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2024 1:51 PM
To: WAI Committee
Cc: Bradford Ventura; Chasserae Kaawa; Cynthia Sasada; Gavin Fujioka; Josiah Nishita; Keanu LauHee; Leo Caires; Louise Batoon; Pili Nahooikaika; Ryan Otsubo
Subject: MT#10490 County Permit Processing Efficiencies
Attachments: MT#10490-WAI Committee.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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Michelle L. Santos

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