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OFFICE OF THE  
COUNTY COUNCIL

March 8, 2021

MEMO TO: PSLU - 14

F R O M: Michael J. Molina Councilmember  
Planning and Sustainable Land Use Committee



SUBJECT: **TRANSMITTAL OF LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL RELATING TO  
REVIEW ASSESSMENT AND AUDIT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
PLANNING** (PSLU - 14)

The attached legislative proposal pertains to Item PSLU - 14 on the Committee's agenda.

CM:MHP:Planning\_audit\_trans\_reso01:grs

Attachment

cc:

# Resolution

No. \_\_\_\_\_

AUTHORIZING THE COUNCIL CHAIR TO  
CONTRACT FOR AN ASSESSMENT OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING ZONING  
ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT  
DIVISION

WHEREAS, on October 26, 2005, Former Council Chair G. Riki Hokama awarded a contract to conduct a review, assessment, audit of the Department of Planning; and

WHEREAS, in March 2006, Zucker Systems presented a report entitled "A Review and Assessment of the Department of Planning, (Assessment) to the Maui County Council; and

WHEREAS, one of the objectives of the Assessment was to "recommend a plan of action, including goals, measures of effectiveness, and timelines, to improve the operations of the Department of Planning (Department) including changes to the Department's table of organization"; and

WHEREAS, the Assessment authors noted "customers clearly show a high level of frustration and some of the worst customer responses we have seen in our studies," the authors further noted that "we also believe the timelines are too long for review" noting that "better management of application functions" and "removal of backlog" is required; and

WHEREAS, Department management confirms in the Assessment that a major need is to have "staff training and develop better policies, procedures and consistency in application processing"; and

WHEREAS, the Department staff requested "good training opportunities, lots of them." Further noting: "This has been lacking in the Planning Department."; and

WHEREAS, within the employee survey of the Assessment staff also noted concerns about colleagues "taking long lunches" and a tendency by some staff "to rule via intimidation and demeaning comments"; and

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WHEREAS, customer surveys in the Assessment noted the length of permit review was unacceptable; staff was not responsive or accessible for resolving issues; initial reviews were not complete or accurate; and there was an inconsistency in application processing amongst staff; and

WHEREAS, some Councilmembers have received complaints that many of the issues noted in the Assessment still exist, especially in the Zoning Administration and Enforcement Division (ZAED); and

WHEREAS, members of the public, building and construction community have noted:

1. Communication is lacking especially as it relates to changes in procedures and forms, without notifying the design community.
  2. Extensive requirements for minor projects in Special Management Areas can be costly and a deterrent from securing permits.
  3. The processing of applications can be very lengthy.
  4. The lack of responsiveness of permit/plan reviewers is very problematic.
  5. Staff has been categorized as “unfriendly, unhelpful, unprofessional and sometimes rude;” and
  6. Application review is inconsistent among staff planners.
- now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it hereby authorizes the Council Chair to contract for an assessment of the Department of Planning, Zoning Administration and Enforcement Division which shall focusing on:
  - a. Review of application and permit processing to determine options for a reduction in processing timelines.
  - b. Determine if staffing requirements have been achieved and maintained; especially as it relates to retention of staff.
  - c. Assess staff morale to determination if “intimidation and demeaning comments” still exists.
  - d. Evaluate the backlog of permits and provide options for reduction,
  - e. Examine customer service to determine if staff is:
    - i. addressing inquiries on a timely basis,

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- ii. exhibiting professionalism in working with the public, and
  - iii. resolving issues raised by applicants and projecting a positive helpful attitude toward the public,
  - f. Analyze the potential for expediting minor permits,
  - g. Assess staff knowledge and training to determine if application or permit review is consistent with all staff planners and reviewers; and
2. That certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Michael P. Victorino, Mayor, County of Maui; Sananda K. Baz, Managing Director; Lance Taguchi, County Auditor; Michele Chouteau McLean, Planning Director; Jordan Hart, Deputy Planning Director.

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY

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Department of the Corporation Counsel  
County of Maui