

CITY OF POMPANO BEACH
CONTRACTORS FORUM
Comment Card Responses

Comment #1 Frequently permits are rejected for various reasons which is understood as part of the process. Subsequent review by engineers, architects and trades prove incredibly difficult and challenging and costly. Pompano Beach interpretations are perceived as overly stringent. Temporary structures require elaborate drawings and specifications in Pompano Beach but not in other South Florida cities. What is the reason?

Response #1 The Florida Building Code is utilized by the City. Chapter 31 of the Florida Building Code includes regulations of temporary structures. The Florida Building Code requires temporary habitable structures used for gathering of 10 or more persons, or over 120 square feet, and that include electric or utility connections, to obtain permits and inspections according to the approved construction documents supplied by the design professional. The construction documents shall also detail the tie downs designed to sustain required wind design pressures.

Comment #2 Zoning - is there a check list of criteria to determine if a project must go to DRC or AAC available on the Pompano Beach website?

Response #2 Yes, a flow chart detailing the Site Plan Review Process (including which meetings are required) is provided on the Zoning Division's webpage. Per Section 158.04 of the City's Zoning Code, the Architectural Appearance Committee ("AAC") reviews include: new construction over 5,000 sq. ft.; additions greater than 25% or 25,000 sq. ft.; landscape projects greater than 10,000 sq. ft.; and, properties on located on major arterial and collector roadways. Additionally Section 156.07(J)(j) of the City's Zoning Code requires AAC approval for signs proposed for multi-tenant buildings in the Atlantic Boulevard Overlay District and signs that are part of a site plan. Single-family houses and duplexes are exempt from AAC review.

While the above is a list of projects that require AAC approval, DRC(Development Review Committee) approvals are for minor or major projects (projects that require Planning and Zoning Board approval) and the list is extensive. A simplistic response is that most projects that increase square footage of structures, parking, or landscaping will require some type of site plan review. An individual single-family house is exempt from DRC review

Staff is working on developing a Frequently-Asked-Questions (FAQ's) for the City website and will add this question and answers.

If you are unsure as to whether your construction project will require DRC and/or AAC approval, please contact Vicky Newson, Principal Planner, (954)545-7783 for a complimentary "Pre-DRC" review of your proposed site plan.

Comment #3 Everyone in the Building Dept. is there to help with any questions with a smile. I tell my customers if they have a question to call and they thank me because people fear to call. *Plumbing Inspector** is respected by all other City inspectors in other cities and for his dedication and knowledge. *Dan Blount Plumbing and Supplies.*

Response #3 Thank you. We appreciate your positive feedback.

Comment #4 I have been a State Certified Contractor for 30 years. Pompano Beach has the best run and staffed Bldg. Dept. in Broward County. *Robert J. Sikorski*

Response #4 Thank you. We appreciate your positive feedback.

Comment #5 A prime issue is the amount of time it takes to get even simple applications through the process. Review is now typically measured in weeks and months. This makes the process for both customers and contractors frustrating. There is a perception that this should be sped up and easier. What can the City do to reduce delays over what has already been done?

Comment #10 Processing permits takes too long to be processed.

Comment #11 Improve the overall timing of the permit process. Turnaround time for comments, etc.

Response #5-10-&11 Prior to the first Contractor's Forum the permit review time was 3-9 days per discipline. Since the first Contractor's Forum the Building Inspection Division has reduced permit review time to 3-5 days per discipline. Ultimately, with the implementation of E-Plan, it is a goal of the Building Inspection Division to limit plan review time to a maximum of two (2) days per discipline.

Comment #6 I don't like using checks – most cities except debit cards. I would like to be able to look up history of addresses and what permits have been previously issued with status. Fort Lauderdale has this. I would like to be able to look up contractor info – expiration on-line before wasting time at Building Department, etc... Also wastes your time. All employees are especially great to our company and the current policies are carried out above beyond as far as I am concerned. A special thanks to *Plumbing Inspector*** and *Plumbing Inspector*** for all their help every day! *Sabrina Wilde, All Porpoise Plumbing (954) 316-5007 . (**Individual Staff names have been removed)*

Response #6 The City allows payment by credit card for all city services. There is a convenience fee of 2.2% (by the credit card company).

Contractors can now check the City's website to see if all documents (general liability, workman's comp, county Business Tax Receipt (BTR), etc. are current and on file with the City. To utilize this resource, please visit the Business Tax Receipt webpage, select the option "Is Your Contractor Up-to-Date?" This online service allows residents and contractors to be better prepared with each permit submittal, thus reducing unnecessary rejections for easy-to-resolve issues.

Staff is currently looking into the feasibility of providing property information online, similar to other municipalities in Broward County. Thank you for this helpful suggestion.

Comment #7 Regarding App. #10-9044 attached comments by *Staff Member*** dated 12/3/10 stated for me to better organize the application. Note that *Staff Member*** received the total application on 11/23/10. I was notified on 12/6/10 to pick the application up and

reorganize the paper. I did so and resubmitted on 12/7/10. Why did it take 13 days to inform me to reorganize the application? *Paul Hensel Construction (954) 570-7344.*
(***Individual Staff names have been removed*)

Response #7 We appreciate you sharing your concern with us. While the staff person referenced is no longer an employee of the City and therefore not available to respond to this comment, the City continues to take a proactive approach to reducing plan review times. As per response to comment #5 staff has reduced plan time review times.

Comment #8 The Professional Engineers Associations is recommending that engineers take Bldg. Dept. Courses. What is the Building Department doing about having Plan Reviewers take some plan reading classes?

Response #8 All Building Inspections Division Chiefs, Plan Reviewers, and Field Inspectors are required to take continuing education classes that includes plan review techniques.

Comment #9 Can you give a reason why tree removal can't be done before Building Permit is approved?

Response #9 Per Section 155.128(B)(7) of the City's Zoning Code, "If removal or replacement of a tree or trees occurs in conjunction with a development permit, the application shall be considered part of the development site plan and no development permit shall be issued without an approved tree removal permit. Removal, replacement, or relocation shall take place before a Certificate of Occupancy is granted." Hence, since tree removal is considered part of the development permit it may not occur until all parts of the permit are approved and a permit is issued.

Comment #12 In the interest of "green" is there some way we can eliminate the need for two copies of lab test results on the common underlayment that we use every week for flooring?
Nancy Bronson – Chris Burke, Inc.

Response #12 The Building Inspection Division requires two copies of the plans as one set must be maintained in the City's files and one set can be given to the contractor, for their use. However, with the implementation of E-Plan, it is anticipated that some plans may be submitted electronically, thus reducing paper waste. For plans requiring Zoning approval, 3 sets of plans are required as one set is retained by Zoning.

Comment #13 I would like to know if there are established requirements for sound proofing underlayments being used with flooring remodels in condominiums?

Response #13 The Florida Building Code is utilized by the City. The Florida Building Code regulates sound proofing of underlayments. Underlayments must comply with ASTM E 90 or ASTM E 492 as per Section 1207 of the Florida Building Code.

Comment #14 Why can't your Engineering Department check the pile driving instead of the contractor getting an engineer to come out and do it?

Response #14 *Under Florida Building Code Chapter 1 Broward County Amendments Section 109.3 Required Inspections A. Building 1. Piling: To be made during the driving of piles Special Inspector. The submission of a pile log is not required by the City Code of Ordinances. The submission of a pile log is mandated by the Florida Building Code. Who is capable of preparing pile log is also mandated by the Florida Building Code to be a Florida registered professional engineer or architect, working for the property owner, not a government entity.*

Section 109.11.5: A special building inspector shall be an architect or engineer or their duly authorized representative.

Comment #15 In the newly annexed neighborhoods (Cresthaven & Highlands) many houses have enclosed carports and converted them to add a bedroom. Many alterations were done without permits under the County. Would the City consider a process to “legalize” these enclosed carports? *Walter Syrek, P.B. Highlands Civic Improvement Assn.*

Response #15 The “grandfathering” process may not be utilized to permit a potentially unsafe structure, Florida Statutes requires all structures to adhere to the Florida Building Code. If there is an illegal structure, regardless if it was built prior to annexation, a property owner may either hire a private engineer to certify the structure, or the property owner may have an architect develop new drawings. In either instance, the property owner must demonstrate that the illegal structure meets applicable building codes and other city ordinances, including zoning. Therefore a building permit from the City must be obtained.

Comment #16 Can you explain the expedited permit process? Can the second review be expedited?

Response #16 Our trained team of permit expeditors, that can be easily recognized by their yellow shirts, are available to meet with applicants to provide a preliminary review of applications and communicate information about our permit process. They also conduct project research and help with paperwork, in order to allow plan reviewers more time to review your building permit. In some cases, they split permits so that different trades can conduct concurrent reviews. These efforts all help expedite the permitting process, so you get your permit sooner. Under some circumstances overtime plan review is offered.

Comment #17 It would be helpful to have inspector’s contact info on permit documents for job coordination.

Response #17 Contact information is available on the City’s website and in the new handout that is given when the permit is issued, Permits Directory and Inspection Instructions.

Comment #18 I would like to see “rejection comments” a little less formidable. When we call the reviewer for clarification it turns out to be something simple.

Response #18 When commenting on submitted plans, Staff is required to note the specific code section of the Florida Building Code at issue. This enables the applicant to review the Florida Building Code requirement(s) and ask questions about the plan reviewer’s

comments. *Plan reviewers may be contacted by email and telephone to discuss any comments that require additional clarification.*

Comment #19 Please see if fields can be populated when filling out on-line forms.

Response #19 Thank you for this helpful suggestion. We aim to continuously revise all of our forms to make them more user-friendly. Based on this comment, the application is now available online and we have added to the online application empty fields for typing in the required information. We will revise other forms accordingly.

Comment #20

(a) Please consider allowing secondary documents after permit issuance. Documents such as Fire Sprinkler shop drawings, Fire Alarm shop drawings, some NOA's should be allowed to be submitted later, and not hold-up master permit issuance.

(b) Thanks for starting to accept credit cards, but should be made available for all transactions.

(c) Enable on-line contractor registration or at least verification.

(d) Phones/PBX attendant needs improvement

(e) E-plan review. Thanks for implementing E-plan review. I'm looking forward to launching it. *Steve Maass, Maass Group, LLC 954 839-6409 smaass@massgroup.com*

Response #20

(a) Currently all drawings are required by the City's Code of Ordinances Chapter 95, Fire Prevention. Fire Prevention staff understands the concerns and is trying to address it through a Code Amendment.

(b) The City allows payment by credit card for all city services.

(c) Contractors can now check the City's website to see if all documents [general liability, workman's comp, county Business Tax Receipt (BTR), etc.] are current and on file with the city. To utilize this resource, please visit the Business Tax Receipt webpage, select the option "Is Your Contractor Up-to-Date?" This online service allows residents and contractors to be better prepared with each permit submittal, thus reducing unnecessary rejections for easy-to-resolve issues.

(d) The City has recently implemented a new phone system. We hope this will resolve any outstanding problems. Please let us know if you experience any difficulties with the new phone system.

(e) Thank you. We appreciate your positive feedback.

Comment #21 Has anyone thought of having one central source to update contractor registration including all licenses and certifications, Worker's Compensation, etc...? That

would allow all Building Department information on-line. What if I supplied them with an insurance policy issued by our insurance carrier that would be universal in nature and would be to all building departments?

The problem we have is we deal with so many building departments and it is cumbersome to update registration for ourselves and our sub-contractors. This is the day of technology, but we are still in the dark ages with respect to so many bldg. dept. registration requirements.
Joseph Crognale, Crognale & Associates (954) 770-6381

Response #21 We appreciate your feedback on this issue. Unfortunately this specific suggestion would need to be implemented at a county or state level. However to make things easier, the City has added a new service on our webpage, which provides the public with the ability to check online to see if all documents (general liability, workman's comp, county Business Tax Receipt (BTR), etc.) are current and on file with the city. To utilize this resource, please visit the Business Tax Receipt webpage, select the option "Is Your Contractor Up-to-Date?"

Comment #22

(a) Will plan review include all departments for electronic review (Zoning, Fire, Engineering)?

(b) Can Fire alarm/sprinkler – sub permits be done after issuance of building permit?

(c) I have heard rumors about outsourcing the Bldg. Dept. Advise why!

(d) How much is the credit card service fee?

Response #22

(a) Yes, electronic plan review via E-Plan will be for all departments.

(b) Currently, all drawings are required by the City's Code of Ordinance, Chapter 95, Fire Prevention. Fire Prevention staff understands the concerns and is trying to address it through a code amendment."

(c) There are no plans in place to outsource the Building Inspections Division.

(d) A convenience fee of 2.2% (by the credit card company) is applied.