



41 Perimeter Center East, Suite 250
 Dunwoody, Georgia 30346
 P (678) 382-6700 F (678) 382-6701
 dunwoodyga.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Warren Hutmacher, City Manager

Date: July 22, 2013

Subject: **Fire Marshal Plan Review, Inspections, and Associated Fees**

ITEM DESCRIPTION

Staff recommends augmenting the County's existing fire marshal services to improve customer service and economic health by completing life safety and fire-related plan reviews and inspections in house for fees identical to DeKalb's existing fees.

BACKGROUND

Since incorporation, Fire Marshal services (such as fire safety inspections and plan reviews) have been provided by DeKalb County through an Intergovernmental Agreement for fire services. State law, specifically O.C.G.A. § 25-2-13, allows for the City to offer augmented services.

Over the past year, the time needed to perform life safety and fire-related plan review functions by DeKalb County's Fire Marshal Office has steadily increased from roughly 30 days to approximately 7-8 weeks. Although the City continues to complete more than 95% of its building and land development plan reviews within two weeks, we cannot issue building permits until any required Fire Marshal reviews are also completed. The delays in life safety and fire-related plan review are negatively impacting both the level of customer service the City can provide as well as the economic development activity within the City.

In an effort to address the delays associated with plan review functions, staff is proposing to augment the life safety and fire-related plan review and associated fire safety inspection services. The attached letter dated July 10, 2013 to DeKalb County Executive Assistant and Chief Operating Officer, Zach Williams, provides notice of the City's intent to provide life safety and fire-related plan review and inspection services. Staff finds that offering these services will enhance our customer service and aid in our community's economic health without negatively impacting our existing processes for plan review and inspections.

There are no anticipated direct costs to the City. Staff recommends adopting fees identical to those currently charged by DeKalb for those services. Our Community Development contractor, Clark Patterson Lee, would retain the fees for services to pay for the staff needed to complete the reviews and inspections. If an applicant chooses to use the City's services, the fees will be paid by the individuals using the services. If an applicant chooses to continue to use DeKalb, they would pay the fees to DeKalb and receive service from DeKalb.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adopting fees for Fire Marshal life safety inspections and plan review equal to DeKalb County's current fees for these services. As stated above, there are no anticipated direct costs to the City.



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July 10, 2013

Mr. Zach Williams
Executive Assistant and Chief Operating Officer
DeKalb County Government
330 W. Ponce de Leon Avenue, 6th Floor
Decatur, GA 30030

Re: Fire Marshal Services

Dear Mr. Williams:

The City of Dunwoody is pleased to share some positive news with DeKalb County. As you know, the backlog of plan reviews for new development projects being reviewed by the Fire Marshal's office has been a concern for both of us. We have identified a solution that will be beneficial to DeKalb County and the City of Dunwoody. More importantly, this concept will allow us to better serve the development community and the constituents that reside within both of our jurisdictions.

The Dunwoody Community Development Department has the staff with proper certifications and experience to complete the life safety and accessibility plan reviews (and inspections) that are necessary for building renovations and new construction. As such, we will offer these as an optional services to those customers in Dunwoody that would choose to have our staff complete these reviews and inspections. This solution would not impact annual safety inspections or arson investigations that would continue to be provided by DeKalb County.

As Fire Services are currently a DeKalb County responsibility in our service delivery agreements, we wish to offer these enhanced services. As such, we are notifying the County of this solution for improved services. We believe that execution of this idea will provide some relief to the DeKalb County workload, while we can maintain a high level of quality reviews, inspections and customer service to our development community. Our hope is that by taking on this responsibility, the workload for the County will decrease and any backlogs or delays in approving plans will be reduced for both Dunwoody and unincorporated residents.

Please let me know if you have any questions. We anticipate starting to offer this service in the next few weeks, once the City Council has adopted the fee schedule for these inspections. The resolution to adopt fees is on our agenda for July 22, 2013. Our intent is to offer the plan reviews and corresponding inspections at the same cost as the County currently charges.

Sincerely,

Warren Hutmacher
City Manager

Cc: Mayor and City Council

Michael G. Davis Mayor

Denis Shortal City Council Post 1
Adrian Bonser City Council Post 2
Doug R. Thompson City Council Post 3

Terry Nall City Council Post 4
Lynn Deutsch City Council Post 5
John Heneghan City Council Post 6

**STATE OF GEORGIA
CITY OF DUNWOODY**

RESOLUTION 2013-07-XX

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING AND APPROVING FEE SCHEDULE FOR FIRE
MARSHAL LIFE SAFETY INSPECTIONS AND PLAN REVIEW**

WHEREAS, the City of Dunwoody is charged with preserving the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the City; and

WHEREAS, in order to provide for expedient services for life safety inspections and plan review to the citizens of the City during development, construction and other permitting processes requiring Fire Marshal review and/or inspection, the City is offering supplemental parallel services from an in-house Fire Marshal to perform life safety inspections and plan review; and

WHEREAS, in order to provide for service comparable to one provided by the DeKalb County Fire Marshal, the Mayor and City Council wish to adopt comparable fee structure for the performance of said services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council for the City of Dunwoody, that the following is adopted as the City’s Fire Marshal Fee Schedule for Life Safety inspections and Plan Review:

FIRE MARSHAL’S FEE SCHEDULE – CITY OF DUNWOODY		
Plan Review Type	Fee Amount	
Site Plan Review		
Initial Review		\$100
1 st Resubmittal Review		\$50
Each Additional Review		\$150
	< than 12,000 sq. ft.	> than 12,000 sq. ft.
Life Safety/Accessibility:		
Initial Review	\$100	\$100
1 st Resubmittal Review	\$50	\$50
Each Additional Review	\$150	\$150
Alarm/Detection System		
Initial Review	\$100	\$150
1 st Resubmittal Review	\$50	\$75
Each Additional Review	\$150	\$200
Automatic Sprinkler System		
Initial Review	\$100	\$150
1 st Resubmittal Review	\$50	\$75
Each Additional Review	\$150	\$200
Fire line		
Initial Review	\$100	\$150
1 st Resubmittal Review	\$50	\$75

**STATE OF GEORGIA
CITY OF DUNWOODY**

RESOLUTION 2013-07-XX

Each Additional Review	\$150	\$200
Hood Suppression System		
Initial Review		\$100
1 st Resubmittal Review		\$50
Each Additional Review		\$150
CONSTRUCTION PERMIT INSPECTIONS		
		Fee Amount
50%-80%-100% Any Construction without deficiencies		\$100
Follow-up inspections from non-compliance		
1 st Re-inspection		\$50
2 nd and all additional inspections		\$100

SO RESOLVED AND EFFECTIVE, this the 22nd day of July, 2013.

Approved:

Michael G. Davis, Mayor

Attest:

Sharon Lowery, City Clerk

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