

Building and Growth Management Update **by Jeffrey Ruggieri, Building and Growth Management Director**

A county reorganization on Aug. 19 created the Building and Growth and Management Department. This department is the consolidation of the existing Growth Management Department and the Building Construction Services Department. Citizens can expect a higher level of overall service as a result. Combining the two departments under one department head, and physically in the same building will significantly increase coordination on permit review and create a seamless decision making structure across the entire development and permitting process. Furthermore citizens will be able to have all their development plans reviewed and questions answered in one physical location. The new department is focused on creating a true 'one-stop' permitting process as well as increasing the quality of customer service and finding additional efficiencies in existing processes. It is our goal to become the model 'one-stop' permitting department in region and the state.

The first immediate change being made is to improve the current process for disapproved and re-submitted permits. The department is in the process of placing a plans reviewer at the front desk to review 'over the counter' permits and resubmitted residential permits. This service will substantially decrease the review time for these types of permits. The department is also improving internal communication and oversight of permit review. A staff member has been assigned to 'permit triage'. This staff member will be responsible for maximizing permit review efficiency and eliminating review downtime through coordinating overall workload, productivity expectations, and available staff time.

Work on the redevelopment for the Hospital District continues. Staff is in the process of preparing a comprehensive presentation of the entire project proposal. The information will be presented in a workshop before the Board of County Commissioners. The workshop will include an analysis of the 13 criteria for the Finding of Necessity report which is required if the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) desires to create a formal Redevelopment District. The comprehensive criteria analysis involves gathering data from many sources including the Property Appraiser's office, Sheriff's office, Social Services, GIS, and private entities such as the local realtor's association. Many other potential redevelopment tools will also be discussed and presented in summary form. Concurrent with this effort is the preparation of an overall conceptual improvement program with appropriate cost estimates, including a new multi-use trail network. Growth Management and Extension Service employees are also working with the State Urban Forestry manager to develop a conceptual tree and landscape program and the associated cost estimates.

The redevelopment workshop for the Hospital District will be held at the regularly scheduled BCC meeting on Sept. 21 at 10:00 a.m. At this meeting staff will seek final Commission direction related to the options they have discussed. The proposed revision to the Zoning and Overlay Code for Manasota and Sandpiper Keys is available for viewing and public comment on our County website at www.CharlotteCountyFL.com. Click the "Manasota and Sandpiper Key Community Planning" link at the top of the page under "Popular Links," then look for "Please click here to view and make online comments...." The online public comment feature will be available until Nov. 15, 2010.