

TO: Andrew P. Powers, City Manager

FROM: Mark A. Towne, Community Development Director

DATE: March 5, 2019

SUBJECT: Resolution to Expedite Permit Processing and Waive Certain Fees for Properties Damaged During the Hill and Woolsey Fires

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt resolution establishing expedited processing procedures and waiver of certain City fees as described in attached resolution.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Financial Impact to be Determined. Staff will monitor fee waivers and report back to City Council as needed. Costs associated with staff time to prepare this report are included in the Adopted 2018-2019 General Fund Budget.

BACKGROUND:

On Thursday, November 8, 2018, the Hill and Woolsey wildfires ignited in and around Thousand Oaks. Between the two fires, over 100,000 acres were burned in Ventura and Los Angeles Counties; the Hill Fire burned 4,300 acres and the Woolsey Fire burned 96,949 acres. Within the Thousand Oaks Planning Area, the fires burned 5,740 acres, or nearly 40 percent of the City's natural public open space, and resulted in the evacuation of approximately 2/3 of the City.

Numerous structures in Thousand Oaks were impacted by these fires. Damage assessments conducted by City building inspectors identified 50 affected properties. These included 36 residences and two commercial buildings that were destroyed, and 12 properties with varied levels of fire damage that remained habitable.

Efforts to bring relief to those impacted by the fire began immediately. A Local Assistance Center was set up in the Grant Brimhall Library, where City staff and representatives from various federal, state and local agencies provided information necessary to move forward after the fires.

Hill and Woolsey Fire Permit Processing
March 5, 2019
Page 2

On November 27, 2018, City Council took a number of actions as part of a Hill and Woolsey Fire Recovery Plan. Among these were approval of budget appropriations and expenditures of \$300,000 to the Adopted FY 2018-19 General Fund Budget for contract staff to assist the Community Development Department with expedited plan review, plan checks, and inspections associated with the fires, and appropriation and expenditure authorization of \$250,000 to the Adopted FY 2018-19 Solid Waste Fund for the City's share of the Consolidated Debris Removal Program and additional site mitigation as needed.

The City has since prepared information packages with permit history, design standards, grading plans, and related documents for each site that lost a home. These documents were given to property owners to aid in their preparation of new permit applications to rebuild.

Current Process

Currently, if a structure is damaged by a natural disaster and previously conformed to current zoning and building standards, then only building permits are required to rebuild it in a similar location and design. No discretionary permit is required.

If a non-conforming structure is destroyed by a natural disaster, then it may be rebuilt to the zoning standards in effect at the time it was originally constructed, but the building must be brought up to current building and safety standards. Like conforming structures, only building permits are required to rebuild. No discretionary permit is required.

In both of these scenarios, no preferential status is typically applied to the rebuild application. Staff reviews the plans in the same manner as every other case, in the order submitted.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Staff proposes the following actions to further assist property owners affected by the Hill and Woolsey Fires.

1. Expedited Planning Review

Staff-level permits for a rebuild are proposed to be processed in 4-6 weeks, instead of the typical 7-9 weeks. This time period includes preparation of the public notification letter and sign, review of the project, and writing the decision report.

Planning Commission-level permits are proposed to be 4-5 months, instead of 4-6 months. Additional time savings on the front end are not possible due to Municipal Code-mandated public notice time frames.

No changes are proposed in the planning steps themselves. Public notice, for instance and public hearings, would still apply as required by City policies or the Municipal Code.

2. Expedited Building Plan Check Review

The normal plan check review process is 4 weeks for first plan check, 3 weeks for second plan check and one week for third plan check. Staff believes that this plan check process can be shortened to 3 weeks, 2 weeks and 1 week for the same plan check steps. These time frames are consistent with neighboring cities affected by the Hill and Woolsey Fires, and last year's Thomas fire.

The review process for both planning and building reviews is anticipated to not exceed 6 weeks if applicants opt to simultaneously submit plans for planning review and building plan check review. In this case, an Acknowledgement of Risk/Waiver must be signed and submitted to the City.

3. Waiver of Certain Planning Application Fees

Staff proposes to waive planning application fees as listed in the attached resolution, which would capture the permit types applicable to a new home or its modification. Application types depend on the underlying zoning designation at the subject properties, and the type and extent of the rebuild proposal itself, which is not known at this time. For any rebuild proposal, the applicant would be subject to only one of these fee categories, as they are mutually exclusive. Normal development impact fees (where applicable) and building permit fees would still apply to rebuild proposals.

4. Waiver of Certain Public Works Fees

The Public Works Department recommends waiver of the fees listed in the attached resolution, which are applicable to many of the damaged properties.

5. Proposed Process

Staff proposes the following steps to assist all property owners that have damaged or destroyed homes as a result of the wildfires.

Step 1: Assignment of Planner and Plan Checker Prior to Application Submittal

Normally a planner and plan checker are assigned to a case after an application has been submitted. For Hill and Woolsey Fire rebuilds, staff proposes that a planner be assigned to upcoming cases before the application is submitted. This would be done through Farnoush Levers, Fire Recovery Concierge, Public Works Department, who is the primary point of contact for affected property owners.

Step 2: Pre-submittal Meetings

Pre-submittal meetings with the assigned planner and plan checker will be held to discuss the project, process, and trouble shoot issues. The staff person will make all necessary appointments with appropriate staff from Planning, Building, Public Works, and the Fire District to guide the applicant going forward.

Step 3: Planning Review

Planning review will be in accordance with the expedited time frames described above.

Step 4: Plan-check Review

Plan check review will be in accordance with the expedited time frames described above.

Step 5: Building Permit Issuance and Inspections

After issuance of a building permit, City inspectors will review the property within 2 business days. Following a successful inspection, the applicant is ready to start re-building their home. Building inspections of new structures will then occur on an as-needed basis.

Expedited processing, which is made possible by City Council's prior appropriation of funds for contract staff, is the primary means to assist property owners in the rebuilding process. This is augmented by waiver of certain planning and public works fees. Staff will monitor fee waivers and report back to City Council on an as needed basis. The attached resolution (Attachment #1) authorizes staff to implement the recommended actions.

COUNCIL GOAL COMPLIANCE:

Meets City Council Goals A and B:

- A. Provide municipal government leadership which is open and responsive to residents, and is characterized by ethical behavior, stability, promoting public trust, transparency, confidence in the future, and cooperative interaction among civic leaders, residents, business representatives, and staff, while recognizing and respecting legitimate differences of opinion on critical issues facing the City.

- B. Operate City government in a fiscally and managerially responsible and prudent manner to ensure that the City of Thousand Oaks remains one of California's most desirable places to live, work, visit, recreate, and raise a family.

PREPARED BY: Kelvin Parker, Deputy Community Development Director

Attachment:

Attachment #1 – Resolution

CDD:520-25\mt\H:Common\City Council\Staff Rpts\022619 Fire Recovery Staff Report.docx

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-004

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF THOUSAND OAKS ESTABLISHING
PERMIT FEE POLICIES AND AUTHORIZING FEE
WAIVERS FOR CERTAIN COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS FEES
FOR RE-BUILDING OF STRUCTURES THAT
WERE WHOLLY OR PARTIALLY DESTROYED IN
THE HILL OR WOOLSEY FIRES

WHEREAS, under the authority contained in California Government Code Sections 8630 and 8634, and City of Thousand Oaks Municipal Code Section 4-405, the Thousand Oaks City Council on November 13, 2018 ratified the proclamations of the existence of a Local Emergency made by the Director of Emergency Services on November 8 and November 9, 2018 respectively, due to the Hill and Woolsey Fires; and,

WHEREAS, the homes of many City of Thousand Oaks residents were destroyed or damaged as a result of these wildfires; and

WHEREAS, City staff is working to proactively assist affected property owners, while also protecting public health, safety, and welfare; and,

WHEREAS, due to the extraordinary circumstances associated with these natural disasters, including significant loss of property and displacement of citizens, the City finds it necessary to establish expedited permitting procedures and waiver of specific processing fees.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Thousand Oaks as follows:

1. The Community Development Department shall establish expedited permitting procedures for planning review and plan check review of applications for homes damaged or destroyed by the Hill and Woolsey Fires.
2. The Community Development Department and Public Works Department shall waive the applicable fees identified in this resolution for properties partially or wholly damaged by the Hill or Woolsey Fires, as shown in Tables 1 and 2 below:

Table 1: Community Development Fee Waivers

Review Type	Fee
Administrative Action	\$ 1,006
Alter Existing Home	\$ 142
Major Modification - Existing Home	\$ 3,090
Minor Modification - New Home	\$ 2,388
Minor Modification - Existing Home Alteration	\$ 1,006
Precise Plan of Design (PPD) - New Home (Administrative Review)	\$ 2,388
PPD - New Home (Planning Commission Review)	\$ 3,000
PPD - Home Alteration (Administrative Review)	\$ 566
PPD - Alteration (Planning Commission Review)	\$ 1,214

Table 2: Public Works Fee Waivers

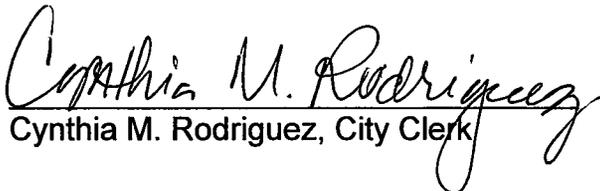
Review Type	Fee
Removal and Recompaction Grading Plan-Check	\$ 310
Removal and Recompaction Grading Inspection	\$ 310
Fire Flow Calculation	\$ 194
Damaged Water Meter Box Replacement	Time and Materials

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 5th day of March, 2019.



Robert McCoy, Mayor
City of Thousand Oaks

ATTEST:



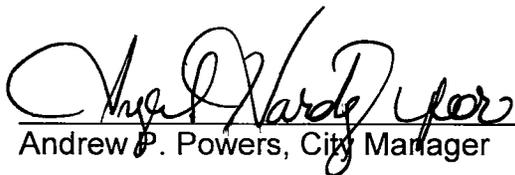
Cynthia M. Rodriguez, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
Office of the City Attorney



Tracy Friedl, Deputy City Attorney

APPROVED AS TO ADMINISTRATION:



Andrew P. Powers, City Manager

CERTIFICATION

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF VENTURA) SS.
CITY OF THOUSAND OAKS)

I, CYNTHIA M. RODRIGUEZ, City Clerk of the City of Thousand Oaks, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of Resolution No. 2019-004 which was duly and regularly passed and adopted by said City Council at a regular meeting held March 5, 2019 by the following vote:

AYES: Councilmembers Bill-de la Peña, Engler, Adam, and Mayor McCoy

NOES: None

ABSENT: Councilmember Jones

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the official seal of the City of Thousand Oaks, California.



Cynthia M. Rodriguez, City Clerk
City of Thousand Oaks, California



Date Attested