

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO.: E(1)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 23, 2001

TITLE: REPORT ON THE "CARRBORO DEVELOPMENT GUIDE"

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING DEPARTMENT	PUBLIC HEARING: YES __ No _X_
ATTACHMENTS: A. RESOLUTION B. CARRBORO DEVELOPMENT GUIDE	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: CHRIS MURPHY, AICP, 918-7334

PURPOSE

The Board of Aldermen, in a continued effort to be proactive in assisting the general public and development professionals through the development review process, requested that staff work on creating a "guide" to assist citizens through the process. The Zoning Division of the Planning Department coordinated the compilation of information from various agencies and departments into the *Carrboro Development Guide (Attachment B)*. The Administration requests that the Board of Aldermen receive the *Carrboro Development Guide*.

INFORMATION

The *Carrboro Development Guide (Attachment B)* is another in a series of improvements made in the Zoning Division over the past several years aimed at providing effective, efficient and responsible government (the Board's goal #2 from the 1999 retreat). Other improvements include organizing and scanning all documents, creating official inspection procedures, shifting and redefining internal positions to create an official 'site development coordinator' position responsible for monitoring all projects under construction and developing a schedule for continued monitoring of previously approved projects. The *Carrboro Development Guide* will be beneficial in assisting citizen's interested in obtaining land use permits for land disturbing activities.

Almost all land disturbing or building activity within the Town of Carrboro requires that a land use permit be obtained prior to beginning work. The complexity of the review process for any particular project depends on the zoning district in which the project is located and the particular type of project that is being undertaken. For example, land use permits for simple additions of decks and/or rooms are simple to obtain (often within two working days). However, land use permits for commercial projects and/or large-scale residential projects (subdivisions or apartments) often take several months and require multiple layers of review. The *Carrboro Development Guide* should assist both citizens and developers in gaining a greater level of comfort about the review process and about the type of information that will be necessary to obtain a permit. It is not intended for the *Carrboro Development Guide* to be used in its entirety for each project. Rather, selected portions of the guide (the process, the application, the checklist, etc.) applicable to the specific project requested will be copied and given to the interested person/persons.

Please note that the *Carrboro Development Guide* will not function as a replacement for the *Land Use Ordinance*. Therefore, the guide will not provide a laundry list of each requirement associated with a certain type of project, since this information is contained in the *Land Use Ordinance*. Such an approach to all of the various projects is difficult, if not impossible, to compile in written form due to the 'limitless' nature of use combinations, zoning districts and site constraints/peculiarities. Rather, the *Carrboro Development Guide* will be used to assist and aid persons through the development review processes, based on their particular project. An example of this would be an individual who wishes to construct a new single-family dwelling on a vacant lot. The responsible Zoning Division staff member would provide the individual with the following information:

- "New Residential Construction (Single-Family)" process (page #16 of the guide);
- "Land Use Permit Application Form" (Appendix A-1 of the guide);
- "Zoning Building Permit review Checklist" (Appendix A-11 of the guide); and

- “Inspection’s Division Requirements for Residential Building Permits (Appendix A-12 of the guide).

The information outlined above would then be used by the individual to complete the submittal process and gain a land use and building permit. An individual seeking a commercial permit would be given similar handouts and guidance.

The *Carrboro Development Guide* will be included in our on-line catalog of documents for easy access. Further, each Planning Department staff member will have a copy of the *Carrboro Development Guide*. Since the Carrboro Development Guide will be in ‘loose-leaf’ form and in a binder, individual sections of the guide can be copied and given to persons seeking less complicated permits. Lastly, the *Carrboro Development Guide* will be available for purchase from the Town. Since the guide serves as a supplement to the Town’s *Land Use Ordinance*, many of our frequent customers (local and regional architects, engineers, planners, etc.) may want to purchase or download the guide for easy reference.

It should be noted that the ‘loose-leaf’ nature of the *Carrboro Development Guide* lends itself to further refinement. Future possible additions to the guide are flow charts for the various permit types and review processes, newly created processes, newly created checklists, revisions generated by text amendments, etc. It should be noted that the Planning Department is not resting on the creation of the guide. In addition to the *Carrboro Development Guide*, the Planning Department is working on other projects aimed at assisting the general public and developers through the permit review process and reaching the Board’s goal of providing effective, efficient and responsible government. The most exciting among these projects is the interactive *Land Use Ordinance*. This on-line service will allow individuals to select a parcel and a permitted use for the particular zoning district the parcel is located within and the computer will generate dimensional information for that particular use and zoning district. Further, the computer will generate a list of applicable *Land Use Ordinance* sections that will apply to the development of the parcel and use selected. This interactive system is in its infancy but work is continuing to be refined and expanded to increase its capabilities/usefulness. Such a system would serve as an additional supplement to the *Land Use Ordinance* and the *Carrboro Development Guide*.

In closing, the *Carrboro Development Guide* will be beneficial in assisting citizens and developers through the development review process. This should help ensure quality development, thus improving the overall quality of life of the Town and its citizens.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends that the Board of Aldermen receive the *Carrboro Development Guide*.