



MEMO

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Joseph A. Fivas

DATE: April 6, 2010

SUBJECT: Creation of Business Development Team

As Town Manager, I believe local government's role is to serve the public interest, which includes upholding and enforcing the laws that govern construction and land use. Zoning and building regulations as well as infrastructure standards are necessary for a safe, well-planned community. Without these regulations, public safety and property values would undoubtedly be adversely affected. Within the next month, I will be implementing an internal **Business Development Team** to help improve the quality of service we provide to new local businesses. It will essentially act as a 'one-stop shop' for helping new businesses to comply with local ordinances, but also to show them that we truly want them to do business in Indian Trail.

The reality is that often those with little or no experience in purchasing property, developing sites or starting a business view the regulations, rules and processes of government as complex, rigid, confusing or unnecessary. It is understood that those with experience working with local government have less difficulty complying with zoning and building regulations, however the Town of Indian Trail recognizes that the development of new business startups requires a different, more personal approach.

The **Business Development Team (BDT)** will consist of the Town Planning staff, Town Engineer, Economic Development staff, and the Town Manager. Other team members may be added based on the particular needs of the prospect. It will be common to invite the Chamber of Commerce, the Union County Partnership for Progress, and perhaps the County public utility staff to these meetings. The Town Manager, or his designee, will serve as the team leader and the direct point of contact for the BDT. The purpose of this role is to provide guidance specific to

the project's unique needs and circumstances. Due to the ever-changing complexity and myriad of grant programs and tax incentives, a project will be customized for each prospect.

PROACTIVE PROSPECT CONTACT

Town staff, especially members of the BDT will actively contact prospective projects that might find the BDT tool useful. Many times, prospects purchase property without conducting their due diligence as it relates to zoning, building construction and infrastructure needs. By proactively seeking out prospects during the planning stage, the Town hopes to provide education on issues related to building, planning, zoning, engineering, etc. before property purchase occurs.

Although seemingly subtle, contact of prospects during the planning stage is critical in averting conflict that places the Town in the position of "undoing" or resolving noncompliance with zoning or building regulations. Marketing of the BDT is necessary so that the community is aware of the tool. For the BDT tool to be successful, the Town will need cooperation for those who routinely deal with these types of issues such as Realtors and financial institutions.

PROJECT ASSESSMENT

By bringing key staff members together referrals within the organization will be minimized and a mutual understanding by the Town staff of the project can be gained. The BDT will identify various issues, concerns, opportunities or challenges that should be considered by the prospect. The BDT will also assist in identifying any state or local incentives that might facilitate the project. The BDT recognizes that local government regulations may not be the only barrier to execution of a project. An entrepreneur also may have needs relating to business plan development, accounting or legal services, project financing and so on. The Chamber of Commerce, by virtue of his/her involvement in the BDT will be able to make appropriate referrals for services based on interaction with the prospect.

PROJECT RESOURCE GUIDE

As a result of the BDT project review, Town staff will prepare a Project Resource Guide (PRG), which will outline project specific requirements that address zoning, building, infrastructure and other pertinent issues. The goal is to develop a document that provides guidance on Town processes and procedures to make it easier for the prospect to navigate. The PRG will also summarize the various incentives that may be available for a given project along with detailed information on any particular requirements. The BDT Leader will be responsible for coordinating information for compilation in the PRG. Reference documents such as state statutes, building codes or local ordinances will also be included as an Appendix to the PRG to establish credibility of information included in the document. Each PRG is considered public information according to the Freedom of Information Act and will be provided to the public by request.

FACILITATION

The Town Manager, or his designee, is the staff is assigned the role of BDT Leader. As a single point of contact, the BDT Leader will assist in coordinating any zoning, building, infrastructure or economic development related issues. The BDT Leader will also provide clarification of questions or concerns by the prospect including appropriate documentation of laws, regulations or policies. The BDT Leader's role is to minimize referrals and eliminate unnecessary contacts with multiple departments that often frustrate prospects.

