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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009

**TO:** The Honorable Jeff Koons, Chairperson and Members of the Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Jeffrey Brophy, ASLA  
DROOC Chairperson

**RE:** Development Review Officer Oversight Committee (DROOC)

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It has come to the attention of the Development Review Officer Oversight Committee (DROOC) that several local organizations have requested information regarding the status of the development review process within unincorporated Palm Beach County. The following memo is a follow-up to an earlier document sent by the Zoning Department to the BCC and outlines the changes being implemented by the DROOC, a committee formed to assist in the revisions of the development process to improve the function and timing of review within the County. Also outlined below is how local organizations can get involved in assisting the DROOC in addressing issues and implementing changes to the current review process, as well as how to get updates to the process as they become available. It is important to the DROOC that the recommendations and decisions made are a result of all those effected within the industry, not just those that represent the projects through the review process.

### **DROOC**

The DROOC is an ad hoc committee comprised of private industry professionals that provide input to the PBC Zoning Division related to the matters of the development review process. Membership includes professional Planners, Architects, Landscape Architects and Engineers who represent both private and public clients through the development review and permitting process. The committee meets quarterly with representatives from Palm Beach County Zoning, Building, Planning and Engineering Divisions to identify issues with the current review process, and implement changes to assist in either improving the function of the review or streamlining the process in general. In addition to the quarterly meetings, an annual "Brown Bag" lunch meeting is held to inform all interested parties of the changes that have been implemented and to listen to ideas from those that may not have the chance to be involved otherwise. Many of the organizations copied on this memo have not attended the annual meeting in the past, but I encourage them to do so if there is any interest in how the development review process effects their profession or the economic well being of the County in general. This year the meeting is tentatively scheduled for Friday, August 21<sup>st</sup> between 11am-1pm at the PZ&B Building.

For a full list of DROOC members, meetings calendar, agendas and minutes, please visit:  
<http://www.pbcgov.com/pzb/Zoning/dro/DROOversight.htm>

### **DEVELOPMENT REVIEW CHANGES-IMPLEMENTED**

While there have been substantial changes to the review process since the DROOC was formed in 2001, the focus of this memo will be the changes made within the last few years, as they have had the greatest impact on how the current process is organized.

**1. Extended Initial Review Period**

The review time from initial submittal to a DRO meeting was extended from 5 weeks to 7 weeks, allowing staff to review the project, issue comments and allow a resubmittal prior to the first DRO meeting. In the previous 5 week system, this was not available and applicants had virtually no chance of gaining DRO approval at the first meeting due to the timing of resubmittals. This has substantially increased the number of projects being approved through the first round of DRO meetings. The addition of 2 weeks on the front end of the project has reduced the amount of follow-up and additional DRO meetings needed in order to gain certification.

**2. On-Line Responses to Staff Comments (ePZB)**

Once an application is submitted for review, staff makes comments through an online system available for viewing by the general public, including applicants. Applicants are able to enter responses to the comments based on their resubmittal. The benefits to the system is that it has created transparency during the site plan review level as the general public can view the comments posted online. In addition it has streamlined the process by getting comments out faster to applicants. Finally, it holds staff and the applicant accountable for the timing of their comment/response entry as there are clearly defined deadlines that need to be met before being 'locked out' of the system. Additional information can be found at the County website at the following link:

[http://www.pbcgov.com/pzb/Zoning/newsrelease/september2008/comment\\_screen\\_training.pdf](http://www.pbcgov.com/pzb/Zoning/newsrelease/september2008/comment_screen_training.pdf)

**3. Early Submittal of Final DRO Site Plans.**

In order to expedite the Final DRO Site Plan process, two new processes have been initiated. The first allows for plans with only minor deviations to skip the full DRO review process and be amended through the Agency or Zoning review, saving months of review time. The second are for those that require full review, but have no issues during the public hearing process. The Zoning Division is allowing applicants early submittal after Zoning Commission, but before BCC for those projects that are on the consent agenda. Overall, this allowance will save two months of review time.

Please go to the link below for the press release regarding this process:

[http://www.pbcgov.com/pzb/Zoning/newsrelease/december2008/dro\\_off\\_bcc\\_board.pdf](http://www.pbcgov.com/pzb/Zoning/newsrelease/december2008/dro_off_bcc_board.pdf)

**DEVELOPMENT REVIEW CHANGES-CURRENT PROJECTS**

**1. Concurrent review of Final Site Plan/Permit drawings**

Within many of the municipalities in Palm Beach County, Final Site Plan review is done concurrently with final Engineering plans, architecture, and other permits. A sub-committee has been established to investigate whether this type of process can work within the PBC system. Currently, there is a pilot program that will accept projects that are willing to submit all permit drawings up front, as long as there are no unresolved platting issues. The task force continues to work with staff on incorporating all permit issues into one review process.

**2. ULDC Amendments**

While the Land Development Regulation Advisory Board (LDRAB) makes recommendations to the BCC on code revisions, the DROOC reviews the code for inconsistencies and problematic sections that hinder the review process. Current code amendments include changes to the requirements of the regulating plans for site plan submittals which will allow for most code required and BCC directed details to be specified at time of Final Site Plan, as well as options for DRO review thresholds and initial Public Hearing Site Plan requirements.

It is important to the members of the DROOC that we inform those throughout the industry on the changes being implemented, and ask for additional suggestions on making the process more streamlined, user friendly and consistent throughout unincorporated PBC and the individual municipalities. While we can offer suggestions based on our own professional experience, it is important to understand the issues as felt by other industry and County organizations and we encourage your input.

Those interested in any of the changes implemented by the DROOC, as well as the current committee's activities and news releases from the County are encouraged to visit the Zoning Division's homepage:

<http://www.pbcgov.com/pzb/Zoning/index.htm>

Zoning has done a tremendous job of providing as much information as possible on their website.

Should you have any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding the development review process or the DROOC, please do not hesitate to contact any of the members as listed online or Jon MacGillis, Maryann Kwok or Wendy Hernandez of the PBC Zoning Division.

cc: **Michael Jones, Economic Council of Palm Beach County, Inc.**  
**Ken Kahn, Business Development Board**  
**Anna Yeskey, Palm Beach County Intergovernmental Plan Amendment Review Committee**  
**Chris Roog, Gold Coast Builder's Association**  
**Michael Busha, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council**  
**Chris Barry, Palm Beach County Planning Congress**  
**Daniel Holbrook, Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association, Treasure Coast**  
**Ignacio Reyes, American Institute of Architects, Palm Beach Chapter**  
**Jonathan Haigh, American Society of Landscape Architects, Treasure Coast**  
**Ana Carmen V. DeMelo, American Society of Civil Engineers, Palm Beach Chapter**  
**Michelle Anaya DePoter, Associated General Contractors of Greater Florida, Inc.**  
**Jamie Titcomb, Palm Beach County League of Cities, Inc.**  
**Carol Bowen, Associated Builders and Contractors**  
**Natasha Cannon, PBC Construction Industry Management Council**  
**Skeet Jernigan, Community Economic Development Council of South Florida**  
**Harry Tanen, Acreage Builders**  
**Jon MacGillis, Director, PBC Zoning Department**  
**Scott Mosolf, Vice-Chair, Development Review Officer Oversight Committee**