



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
REGULAR MEETING

#20-0634

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Chris Lagerbloom, ICMA-CM, City Manager

DATE: October 20, 2020

TITLE: First Reading - Ordinance Amending the Code of Ordinances Chapter 9,
Building and Construction Fees, and Landscaping and Tree Removal
Permit Fees - **(Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)**

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Commission approve an amendment to the Code of Ordinances Chapter 9, Building and Construction Fees, and the Landscaping and Tree Removal Permit Fees.

Recommended Building Fee Amendments

Building permit fees fund operations associated with the Building Services Division of the Department of Sustainable Development. The department performs plan reviews, inspections, issues building permits, and enforces the Florida Building Code. Building permit fees are identified as any fee charged to obtain a permit for construction, renovation, replacement or physical improvement to a residential or nonresidential property within the corporate limits of the City of Fort Lauderdale.

Building Services' current rate for permit fees is based on a base fee plus the sum of construction job cost times a fixed percentage per trade. The sum of described calculation equals the total permit fee. The primary change to building permit fees has two goals.

1. To simplify the approach to calculating the fees.
2. Reduce the amount of fees collected to keep the building fund in line with State of Florida statutory requirements.

As described above, the current building fee structure includes a base rate of \$105 plus the percentage of construction costs. The current percentage range for the four trades (Structural, Electrical, Mechanical and Plumbing) ranges from 0.7% to 2% depending on the type of permit submitted.

Adopting the proposed amendments will require for all building permit fees to be assessed a minimum fee of \$105 or 1.25% of a project's total estimated construction cost, whichever value is greater.

Summary of Proposed Building Fee Schedule Amendments

Recommended Building Permit Fee Schedule amendments are as follows:

- Construction permit percentage for all trades – Minimum fee - \$105 or 1.25% of construction job costs, whichever value is greater.
- Premium Fee (permits requiring zoning, landscape and engineering review) - will be reduced to a minimum fee of \$88 or 0.06% of the construction value, whichever value is greater.
- Provides definitions for the terms Master Permit, Trade Permit, Private Provider and Stand-Alone Permit.

Recommended Landscape and Tree Removal Amendments

In Section 9-52 of the City of Fort Lauderdale Code of Ordinances, when an application for a landscaping and tree removal permit is approved, the applicant must remit payment in accordance to the current fee schedule. Staff requested for a third-party consultant to review the existing landscape and tree removal fee schedule. As a result of third-party fee review, staff recommends new landscaping fees and tree removal rates. The fee rates recommended are similar to fees charged by local municipalities. A summary of the new fees is listed below.

Summary of Landscape and Tree Removal Fee Schedule Amendments

Recommended Landscaping and Tree Removal Amendments are as follows:

- After the Fact Permit – 4 times x \$50 removal fee per tree plus flat rate
- New Construction/Installation - \$250 flat rate plus \$50 per tree
- Job Check - \$250
- Initial Landscape Review/Inspection - \$350
- Reinspection Fee - \$250
- Permit Renewal Fee - \$250 flat rate plus either 50% before the permit expires or 100% after the permit expires
- Single Family Residence Permit Renewal Fee - 50% before the permit expires or 100% after the permit expires
- Revised Landscape Installation Review - \$350
- Revised Tree Removal/Relocation Plan - \$250 flat rate plus \$50 per tree for tree removal
- Tree Removal/Relocation - \$250 flat rate plus \$50 per tree for tree removal
- Single Family Residence Tree Removal/Relocation- \$150 flat rate for first two trees plus \$50 per tree for tree removal

The ordinance, as amended, is included as Exhibit 1.

Resource Impact

Proposed amendment is anticipated to slightly reduce the building fund balance. The decline will be due to lowering the percentage used to calculate permit fees. Revenue is expected to cover the operational needs of the Building Services Division for FY2021. Additionally, the

amendment reduces the Premium Fee revenue by 80% (\$1M to approximately \$200,000). The revenue loss is replaced with new fees specifically adopted for engineering, landscaping, and zoning services.

Strategic Connections

This item supports the *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2024* Strategic Plan, specifically advancing:

- The Internal Support Focus Area
- Goal 8: Build a leading government organization that manages all resources wisely and sustainably
- Objective 1: Maintain financial integrity through sound budgeting practices, prudent fiscal management, cost effective operations, and long-term planning

This item advances the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035 Vision Plan: We Are Community*.

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – Ordinance

Prepared by: Al Battle Jr., Deputy Director, Sustainable Development
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Department Director: Anthony Gregory Fajardo, Sustainable Development