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**Public Works/  
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**Staff Report**

**SS ITEM** 3

**To:** Lemoore City Council  
**From:** Judy Holwell, Project Manager   
**Date:** September 26, 2013  
**Subject:** Planning Update

**Discussion:**

It has been nearly five full months that the City has been without an established Planning Department. Since that time, existing City staff members have stepped up to make sure that planning functions continue to be processed. As reported previously, our dedicated Public Works and Building Department staff members continue to assist in providing excellent customer service to anyone requiring planning functions. With the expertise of our appointed City Planner, Steve Brandt of Quad Knopf, planning services are being administered expeditiously in an effort to accommodate the timelines of our customers – the residents and business owners in Lemoore and outside developers. On July 16, 2013, staff provided an update to Council regarding the transition in providing planning services, including the number of applications processed and the cost to the City to provide such services. Staff was directed to report back quarterly.

On June 4, 2013, the City approved a contract with Quad Knopf to provide technical planning services for the year, keeping the cost to \$100,000 or less, and updating the zoning code for no more than \$30,000. As shown below, the amount expended to date for technical planning services following the approval of the contract is \$9,222 and the total expended for the zoning update is \$17,351. Also shown below is the balance available for each of the two categories identified in the contract.

<u>Quad Knopf Services</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Contract Balance</u>
May – Technical Planning Services (Not included in total - prior to contract approval date)	\$4,432	
June-August – Technical Planning Services	\$9,222	\$90,778
June-August – Zoning Ordinance Revisions	\$17,351	\$12,649

Staff is continually striving to provide high quality, prompt customer service. When applications are received, if they can be handled in house, they are typically approved

within a couple of days. If they are more technical in nature, they are given to our City Planner. The typical turnaround time is less than five working days. However, projects that are more complex in nature (Tentative Subdivision Map, Planned Unit Development, Major Site Plan Review), require Planning Commission and/or City Council approval and additional process time is necessary.

So that Council can gauge the demand for planning services, the following table is provided, which indicates the number and type of applications received and processed since May 1, 2013:

	<u>Received</u>	<u>Processed</u>
Administrative Site Plan Review	2	2
Assigned Addresses	29	29
Conditional Use Permit	0	0
General Plan Amendment	1	0
Home Occupations	12	12
Large Daycare	1	1
Lot Line Adjustment	1	0
Major Site Plan Review	1	0
Minor Deviation	2	2
Planned Unit Development	1	0
Plot Plan Review	24	22
Preliminary Site Plan Review	2	2
Sign Approval	5	5
Temporary Use Permit	2	2
Tentative Subdivision Map	1	0
Zone Change	1	0

Staff also assists residents, businesses and developers, at the counter, through email and phone calls, by answering various questions regarding permitted uses on properties, public records request, setbacks, conditions of approval, placement of accessory structures in yards (e.g. carports, out-buildings, pools, patios, awnings, potential signage, etc.), and other planning related inquiries. The turnaround time in answering these questions is typically one to two days.

As outlined above, the cost to process the technical planning services for the three-month period has averaged just over \$3,000 per month. If the number and complexity of applications to process remains the same for the remainder of the year, the cost for planning services will be less than the anticipated \$100,000. That being said, with the construction of the 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue interchange, and the availability of the redevelopment property in the Lemoore Industrial Park, there is the potential for several new projects to arise. In fact, staff has already discussed potential projects with developers eyeing those properties. Additionally, it appears as though development on the West Side may pick up as well. If planning activity does increase, the City should still realize an overall savings compared to the cost of maintaining the entire Department.

With regard to the zoning update, Mr. Brandt has been diligently reviewing our Code and has met with the Planning Commission on five separate occasions to discuss proposed changes. Our current Code was adopted April 17, 2012. Since then, many

negative comments have been received from the development community, as well as staff, regarding various regulations that make the development process in Lemoore difficult, costly, and lengthy. A joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 8 to review the proposed changes. If we can keep to the proposed timeline, the update is expected to be complete by the end of 2013.

Many positive comments have been received from community members and developers regarding the ease and speed at which their applications are being processed. When applications are received that are not complete, staff notifies the applicants and works with them until all the required materials are supplied. The application and supporting documents are not sent back to the applicant. They are held until the remaining documentation is received, which is much more efficient. In the short amount of time that we have operated using this new practice, applicants appear to be satisfied and most have commented favorably about the actions taken by our Council Members to streamline the permitting process.

**Budget Impact:**

None.

**Recommendation:**

Accept the progress report and direct the City Manager to continue to monitor the planning progress and report back to Council every three months.