CHAPTER 9: COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DEPARTMENT

The Community Improvement Department performs the following functions; Permits, Inspections, Signs, Code Enforcement, Business Tax Receipts, Landscaping, Litter Prevention, Animal Control, Neighborhood Services.

CURRENT DELRAY BEACH BEST PRACTICES

Presently the Community Improvement Department has several areas where it works to preserve/enhance native habitat and natural resources including:

- Requires mitigation for consumption of natural habitat or resources.
- Has enforced a tree preservation ordinance and requires the planting of native canopy trees in landscape plans.
- Regulates impervious parking surfaces by limiting the percentage of the site that can be covered with impervious area.
- Has enforced a septic system replacement ordinance.

Additionally the Community Improvement Department has several areas where it works to Conserve Water Resources and Facilitate Recycling:

- Requires automatic rain sensors on landscape sprinkler systems that prevents the sprinkler system from running if the landscape has received adequate rain. This saves substantial potable water resources.
- Requires a professionally prepared Landscape Plan requiring a substantial percentage of native/drought tolerant plants (xeriscaping), which again saves substantial potable water.
- Co-ordinates Recycling Services, which are performed under contract by Waste Management. The city has a recycling program in place with good community participation rates.
- Lastly, the Department's Neighborhood Services Division has a Litter Prevention & Community Recycling Education Coordinator, Ms. Jennifer Buce, who in charge of outreach and education.
- Has an Adopt-A-Street Program where Organizations, individuals, and businesses "adopt" a minimum of one half mile stretch of a City street and agree to pick up litter at least four times a year.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES BEYOND DELRAY BEACH

Gainesville, FL

Gainesville has been an early leader in green building in the State of Florida. Gainesville's efforts have been a model for many other ordinances. They have adopted a green building ordinance that includes fast track permitting for building permits, and a 50% reduction in building permit fee. To receive these incentives, an independent third party must certify the building as a green building. The city government also provides marketing incentives including erection of building signs at the site, placing participants on city Web site and press releases. Finally, a Green Building Award from the City of Gainesville recognizes one participant each year that demonstrates commitment to the program. (See Ref 9.1)

Sarasota, FL

Sarasota County created a "Green Building Ordinance" which is a virtual clone of the Gainesville ordinance, with some minor adjustments. The Ordinance Provides for permit fee reductions, fast track permit processing, public relations / marketing for green projects, and a yearly "Green Award" program. (See Ref 9.2)

Sarasota County, FL

Sarasota has long been a Florida Epicenter of Green Building, and has several LEED Gold County Buildings including a Library and a County Office Building. A Whole Foods Market has been awarded a LEED Silver rating. The Sarasota Girl Scout Headquarters, Kanaya Condominium Tower, & Kimel Lumber have all been awarded various LEED ratings. These and others are the result in part of the stimulating effect of their Green Building Ordinance. The City of Sarasota has expedited permitting based on projects utilizing the Florida Green Building Coalition checklists and programs. See (See Ref 9.3)

University of Florida

The University of Florida in Gainesville is also in the forefront of green building and requires all new buildings to be built to LEED Silver standards. With an electric bill for the campus of over $130 million a year, there is a tremendous incentive to construct efficient and environmentally responsible buildings. (See Ref 9.4)

The University notes, "In 2001, the university adopted LEED criteria for design and construction for all major new construction and renovation projects to deliver high performance and sustainable buildings. At that time LEED was at its infancy, but we truly believed then and now even more that green buildings minimize the negative impact of buildings on the environment, contribute to saving energy and enhance the occupants' health and comfort. FPC is the first in the state of Florida to require a LEED accredited professional on staff to ensure LEED criteria

incorporated in design and construction on all our major projects. Our LEED accredited professional works with the project design teams to obtain the highest level of LEED certification for all projects." (See Ref 9.5)

Menlo Park, CA

Menlo Park's "Green Ribbon Committee", analogous to the Green Task Force, recently submitted a detailed report that recommended that the city adopt policies and ordinances in the area of Green Building. The report suggests that the City promote sustainable building practices by instituting checklists that are based on standards established and maintained by "green building" programs such as LEED and BIG (Build It Green), and by providing an over-achievement incentive in the form of expedited building permit approvals. (See Ref 9.6)

Additional Examples

Additional information on other green building programs is available in the Appendix Section Titled "Summary of Green Building & Recycling Programs in Selected Cities in Florida & Nationwide". This Summary includes, in addition to those mentioned above, reviews of the following programs: Miami-Dade County, FL; Tallahassee, FL; Coconut Creek, FL; Palo Alto, CA; Pasadena, CA; San Jose / Silicon Valley, CA; Santa Monica, CA; Santa Barbara, CA; San Francisco, CA; Boulder, CO; Boulder County, CO; Seattle, WA; and Portland, OR. (See Ref 9.7). In addition, the USGBC provides a current listing of green building programs nationwide. (See Ref 9.8)

QUICK WINS / LOW-COST GREEN RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Enable Commercial Recycling by Allowing Pick-up of Recyclable Material (Cardboard, Paper, Glass, Metal) by Qualified Recyclers

Currently, there appear to be hurdles to commercial recycling for offices and merchants in Delray Beach. Recycling pick-up is provided for residences, and as of May of this year, the market for construction and waste debris was opened up to other qualified haulers (in effect, expanding the number of companies providing construction waste recycling). However, recycling is not available for restaurants, merchants, and offices. There is an opportunity to expand the market for recycling for this constituency. The Green Task Force repeatedly heard from citizens requesting this and heard many stories of downtown merchants going to great efforts, including hauling recyclables home to be deposited in residential containers, just to make sure waste was recycled because they had tried, and failed to get recycling at their place of business.

Recommendation 2: Adopt Paperless "Online" Building Permit Applications

Presently Building Permits & Sub-permits plus Zoning Applications are printed and applicants

manually print or type up the forms and submit drawings and maybe hundreds of pages of Product Approval Sheets, along with a check for the initial application fee, to a Permit Clerk or Zoning Technician who types key info into a computer. An online submittal process would save many thousands of pages of paper, all of the energy to print the application, and labor to organize and type in the information by an intake clerk. Also the Application and supporting documents would not need to be microfilmed, only the plan sheets themselves (and Plans could be required to be submitted in PDF Format as well, if desired). This could potentially save hundreds of man-hours of microfilming and associated costs.

Recommendation 3: Create a "Green Building Basics" Public Information Campaign

Create a series of short, easily-digestible "Green Building Basics" brochures to describe and promote the city's green building initiatives, and how residents and builders can "Build Green" in short, easily digestible, monographs.

Recommendation 4: Create "Green Building & Recycling Basics" Public Information Campaign for Children

Create a Series of Informative "Green Building & Recycling Basics" brochures for kids to describe and promote green building and proper recycling among school age children. The Litter Prevention & Community Recycling Education Coordinator could incorporate these into presentations at area schools, and these could be available for download from the City's website by area teachers. This idea was ranked in the top 5 at the Task Force Public Citizen workshop.

Recommendation 5: Require Energy Star Appliances in all Building Applications

Require "Energy Star Appliances" as part of the building permit submission process for single family & multi-family residential projects and applicable commercial projects. Without stipulating any specific brand, require Energy Star rated appliances including refrigerators, dishwashers, built in microwave / hoods, clothes washers (clothes dryers are not rated). A link to the Energy Star Website can be included on the City's website. A simple schedule of proposed appliances could be included on the cover page of plans submitted for permit, and checked off as part of the final building inspection. (See Ref 9.9)

Recommendation 6: Mandate Cool Roofs

Mandate cool roofs, cool pavements, and shade trees. Roofs and paved surfaces that soak up heat and radiate back to the environment increase the need for air conditioning, and raise ambient local temperatures, creating additional environmental micro-climate problems. Lighter colored surfaces and roofs, such as Energy Star roofing products, and shade tress help to mitigate this problem. One thousand (1000) ft^2 of a white roof, replacing a dark roof, offsets the emission of 10 tons of CO2. (See Ref 9.10)

Recommendation 7: Encourage Installation of Solar Hot Water and / or Solar Electric by

Streamlining Permitting Process

Encourage the installation of solar water heaters and solar electric (photovoltaic or PV) systems on single family, multi-family residential, and commercial buildings. This can be accomplished by streamlining the application process:

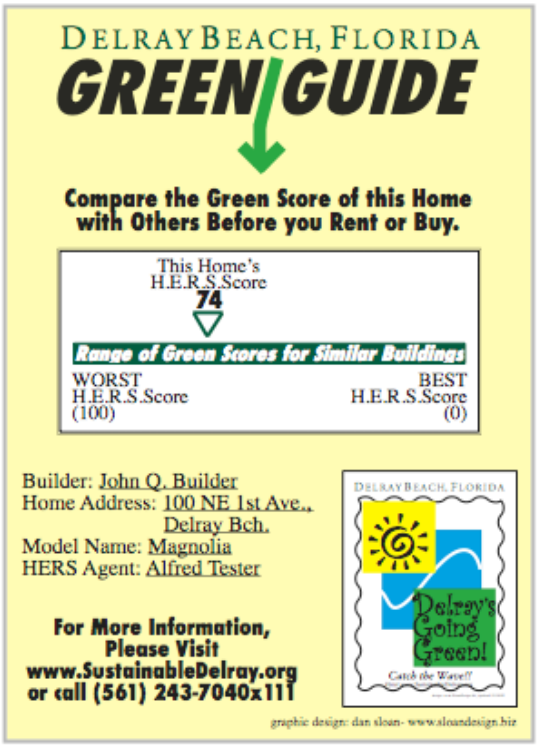
- Have standardized, pre-approved, pre-engineered designs developed by staff or by a future Green Advisory Board. A link to the plans and specifications could be included on the City's website.
- Have $0 permit fees, and 1-day permit turnaround, if the standardized design is used. Set up simple online permit application process to minimize staff labor cost for these permits. If grants are available, have low interest loans available to support the program.

By developing simple, standardized, pre-approved designs, which can be permitted in one day, and charging a $0 permit fee widespread adoption of these technologies can be "jumpstarted". Solar water heaters and small scale PV systems both offer the homeowner or building owner a very good financial investment in conjunction with Federal tax credits and Florida's solar rebate program. *Taking the Red Tape out of Green Power* is a report that focuses specifically on the issue of renewable energy and the local permitting process. (See Ref 9.11)

LONGER-TERM / STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Require Green Benchmarking for New Buildings / Substantial Renovations

Consider a benchmarking system so that consumers can see the energy performance of a building, similar to those available for vehicles and appliances. To minimize staff time and consumer confusion of multiple rating systems, the program could use existing programs such as the Home Energy Rating System (HERS), LEED, or Energy Star. Building permit applicants could use a standard graphic that is modeled on the yellow energy efficiency sticker on all new appliances. Applicants could use a simple online form with data entry fields to generate the form automatically as a PDF, which could be emailed to them and submitted along with the building permit application. The form / graphic would also be required to be posted adjacent to the entry door to sales and leasing centers for larger projects or by the entry door for individual homes. See below for a mockup of the proposed form for residences (a similar form could be developed for commercial buildings).



Recommendation 2: Create a Green Building Awards Program

Create an annual "Green Building Award" Program to award the green building project undertaken in Delray Beach in the prior year. Categories might Include Small Commercial, Large Commercial, Non-Profit, Small Residential, Green Residential Remodel, Green Historic Preservation Project etc. The winners could be awarded in conjunction with other annual design and construction awards, or at a City Commission meeting with a plaque, etc. and information about the winners posted on the City's Website.

In addition, winning entries could become "Case Studies" made available to the public, detailing the unique features of the project, plus photos, etc. These valuable "Case Studies" would also be available for download to inspire and inform others to "push the green envelope" in terms of design and construction on a local level.

REFERENCES

Ref 9.1 - Gainesville, FL Green Building Program Ordinance
Ref 9.2 - Sarasota County, FL Green Building Ordinance

Ref 9.3 - Natural Capitalism - Sarasota, FL
Ref 9.4 - University of Florida Green Building Report
Ref 9.5 - University of Florida Facilities LEED Program
Ref 9.6 - Menlo Park, CA Climate Action & Recommendations Report
Ref 9.7 - Summary of Green Building & Recycling Programs
Ref 9.8 - USGBC List of Government Initiatives
Ref 9.9 - Energy Star Appliances
Ref 9.10 - Heat Island and Reflective Surfaces
Ref 9.11 – Taking the Red Tape out of Green Power

Note: All references are available as clickable links within this electronic document and available online at http://www.SustainableDelray.org/report.htm