



COUNTY OF LAKE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
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MEMO

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Richard Coel, Community Development Director *RC*

SUBJECT: Response to Grand Jury Final Report; Community Development Department, Code Enforcement Recommendations, Page 6

DATE: August 29, 2014

The Community Development Department appreciates the comments and recommendations provided by the Budget and Finance Committee of the Lake County Civil Grand Jury in its Final Report dated June 30, 2014. There continues to be a number of challenges in funding the Code Enforcement Program, yet demand for code enforcement is increasing. A consistent and reliable funding source is needed for the program.

The following responses are in the numbered order of the recommendations provided on page 62 of the 2012/13 Lake County Civil Grand Jury Final Report:

- R1. The County Administrative Office is recommending the Board of Supervisors approve additional, temporary funding to provide for a Code Enforcement Program Supervisor and a Code Enforcement Officer for a two-year period, in the final budget expected to be adopted on September 3, 2014. The funding is proposed in the form of a grant of \$125,000 per year for the next two years. However, re-establishing the Code Enforcement program as a separate Division within the Community Development Department is not contemplated at this time as it is not financially feasible. Instead, the Department is separately tracking revenues from enforcement activities. These revenues are the result of late permit fees and fines for unpermitted construction and grading. The amount of fines/fees paid between March and September of 2014 have totaled \$34,000 and are a direct result of the Chief Building Official and the new Community Development Technician's diligence on enforcement cases involving unpermitted construction.
- R2. At the recommendation of the County Administrative Office and Community Development department, the Board of Supervisors approved one time funding, initially for one year with the possibility of extending it for an additional year, for the hiring of a Community Development Technician for the Code Enforcement Program. This temporary position was filled on March 31, 2014 and is proving to be effective. The Department has been able to increase the number of Notice of Nuisances posted at sites and case management has improved. As of August 29, 2014, staff is following up on 70 properties around the County that have been posted with Notices and are ready for follow up and abatement as necessary.

- R3. The Community Development Department agrees that the Planning fee waiver program, set to expire on December 31, 2014, not be extended. Planning fees are already very low in Lake County and do not appear to be a factor in decisions for new development.
- R4&5. The Community Development Director is preparing information that will be presented to the Board of Supervisors this Fall, in support of incrementally increasing planning application and grading permit fees. The fees were last increased in 2003 and even at that time were well below the average of fees collected by other rural county planning departments in California. Staff believes that fees should be increased in a series of steps, such as 10% per year for four (4) years and then tied to the Consumer Price index for annual adjustments.

The Community Development Department again wishes to express its appreciation of the Budget and Finance Committee's well-thought-out recommendations for ways to improve the Code Enforcement Program and its funding sources. The Department continues to focus all of its available resources toward the program and process revisions continue to be made that improve our efficiency in operating the Program.