



ZONING ENFORCEMENT OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Mayor David Martin

*James J. Lunney, III, RA
Land Use Administrator
Zoning Enforcement Officer*

TO: Norman F. Cole, AICP, Land Use Bureau Chief

FROM: James J. Lunney III, R.A., A.B.O., Z.E.O.

RE: Zoning Inspections

DATE: April 16, 2015

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James J. Lunney III".

In response to a request from the Fiscal Committee of the Board of Representatives, I have compiled the following summary of zoning complaints and inspections performed by Office of Zoning Enforcement.

Zoning Complaints by Origination

The Zoning Office receives an average of **21 new complaints per week**, from the following sources:

- Citizen Service Complaints: 8+ per week (430 per year)
- Interdepartmental Referrals: 3 to 6 per week
- E-mailed Complaints: 3 to 5 per week
- Phone Calls: 3 to 6 per week

Zoning Inspections

The Zoning Office currently performs an average of **16 inspections per week**. Complaint related Inspections represent about 75% of this total, or **12 inspections per week**. The balance of inspections are related to new or current zoning permits or zoning inquiries.

The number of inspections varies daily as time permits, after the completion of public office hours from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm to process new zoning permit applications. The number of people seen in the morning is currently capped at 20, due to staffing limitations, and this number is usually reached or exceeded. Upon completion of office hours, office time is spent processing paperwork for permits, writing letters and e-mails, issuing certificates of compliance and reviewing and signing off on

Certificates of Occupancy. Time is also spent reviewing applications to the ZBA, Zoning Board and Planning Board. Inspections are scheduled in the afternoon, as time permits, after the day's office work has been completed.

The Zoning Office is currently staffed with three people - a Zoning Enforcement Officer, and two Land Use Inspectors. This staffing level is 25% below the staffing level maintained until just a few years ago.

Outstanding Zoning Complaints

There are an estimated **260 open or unaddressed zoning complaints at the present time**. Of these, 68 are listed as outstanding zoning complaints in the Citizen Services Data Base, indicating that no investigation or follow-up has occurred. There are an additional 100+/- complaints that have received some initial attention, but that are not resolved. When a complaint has been resolved for a particular property it is quite typical for violations to recur and require new investigation and action. Currently, there are an additional 100 +/- reopened complaint files that had been previously investigated and closed. Historically, the Zoning Office has tens of thousands of complaints on file, any one of which could reactivate at any time.

Staffing History

Over the past five years, staffing of the Zoning Office has ranged from four people to two people, and is currently at three people. Priority must be given to processing and administering zoning permits, and a two person staff provides little if any time for complaint inspections and follow-up. With limited inspection time, people who are trying to do the right thing, and need inspections to complete their projects, are given priority. A three person staff still imposes limitations on public office hours and wait times to see a member of the zoning staff, and the amount of time that can be devoted to complaint investigations and enforcement. Based on past experience, a staff of three can manage to keep abreast of new complaints as they are reported, but cannot reduce the backlog of open complaints.

***James J. Lunney III, R.A., A.B.O., Z.E.O.
City of Stamford
Land Use Administrative Officer
Zoning Enforcement Officer
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