



MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # 305-2013

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Matti Herrera Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: August 29, 2013

SUBJECT: Residential/Homeowners Permit Help Desk

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The purpose of this Letter to Commission is to update the City Commission on the Building Department's efforts to publicize its Homeowners Help Desk and to provide utilization summaries for the initiative.

At the August 21, 2013 Budget Workshop, some members of the City Commission suggested that more publicity for the new initiative was necessary to increase utilization of the program by residents. Both staff and the Administration agree that the Residential Permit Assistance Program should be publicized to the fullest extent, and efforts to do so will continue aggressively. The program was the subject of an article in the "Summer 2013" edition of MB Magazine, and has also been featured on MBTV. There is a featured link on the home page of the City's web site with information on the program. Large posters advertising the initiative are located in the second floor lobby of the Building Department, and throughout the first floor entrance to City Hall where the desk is located. Additional efforts will be made to reach out to each individual Neighborhood Association to actively engage them in publicizing the project, as well as other groups and associations throughout the City.

For the period of May 28, 2013 to August 16, 2013, the Residential Permit Help Desk assisted a total of 2,497 people. The desk is located immediately to the right as customers enter City Hall, and is usually the first stop for anybody seeking information on where they need to go to transact their business with the City. Though providing this information is not the primary purpose for the desk, it is an extremely valuable function to serve and fills a need in our lobby. Approximately 284, or 11%, of customers utilize the desk for permitting assistance, amounting to an average of four to five people per day. It is important to note that the help desk provides more than just "question and answer" assistance with permits. Where necessary, the Permit Clerk will walk a homeowner through the process both on the first floor and in the Building Department lobby on the second floor. Permit assistance visits can be quite time consuming. Utilization of the Help Desk has already increased dramatically from its inception and is expected to continue to grow as positive "word of mouth" and our publicity efforts continue. Finally, the first floor Permit Clerk is equipped with full computer access and is able to fill any down time with work that has been pre-assigned.

We hope that this information has addressed any questions you may have about the Residential Permit Help Desk. Please let us know if you need any additional information.


 JLM/JJ/MVF/SS