



City of Miami Beach, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Florida 33139, www.miamibeachfl.gov

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Finance & Economic Resiliency Committee Members

FROM: Alina T. Hudak, City Manager

DATE: July 23, 2021

SUBJECT: **DISCUSS CREATING A POSITION FOR A SINGLE-FAMILY HOME PERMITTING OMBUDSMAN**

History:

This item was referred to the Finance & Economic Resiliency Committee (FERC) at the May 12, 2021 City Commission meeting by Commissioner Arriola and Co-Sponsored by Commissioner Meiner.

Analysis:

The Building Department has a customer service center that handles customer inquiries and issues via phone and email. Customers with inquiries and issues may call the Building Customer Service Center at (305) 673-7610, press 0, Monday – Friday from 8am-3pm and be assisted by one of the department's eight customer service reps, plus one supervisor and manager of the team. Additionally, the Building Customer Service Center responds to emails received at the dedicated email addresses per topic, and we're thrilled to announce that in an effort to serve our local residents, homeowners now have a dedicated email address they can use to reach staff dedicated to assisting the homeowner and provide prompt response and often solutions to any questions or concerns they may have regarding the building permitting process.

BuildingInfo@miamibeachfl.gov - For all general building questions

BuildingContractor@miamibeachfl.gov - For all contractor registration related matters including updating licenses and insurances

BuildingInspection@miamibeachfl.gov - For all inspection related questions

HomeOwnerBuild@miamibeachfl.gov - is monitored by Leonor Hernandez, a long-time community liaison, to ensure that homeowners that are trying to navigate the building process or have concerns with an ongoing application have a direct line of communication with someone in the Building Department that can assist within the next business day.

Inquiries and issues received from homeowners and new business owners are specifically handled with care by the section's Customer Service Manager or Quality Assurance Coordinator.

The customer service center on average receives 250 calls per day and 90 emails, with requests ranging from the status of a permit, inspection route information, inquiry on how to apply for a permit, and request for clarification on a review or process. The customer call center has recently (as of mid-May) updated its phone system to an ACD system that allows for better tracking and monitoring of calls. This will insure uniformity and work towards the highest level of customer service.

The Building Department has also worked to map the permitting process and look for opportunities to improve efficiencies throughout permitting.

Recommendation:

Collectively these improvements should help the permitting process. The Customer Service Manager is already serving as a point of contact for homeowners. We recommend that the improvements are allowed 6 months of implementation to better assess their efficacy before funding an additional position.