



**HISTORIC
FRANKLIN
TENNESSEE**

**CITY OF FRANKLIN
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION**

A meeting of the Development Services Advisory Commission was held at Eastern Flank Battlefield Park Event Facility, on Tuesday, May 6th, 2025, 8:00 am – 9:00 am.

Committee Members

Matt Bryant, Chair	P
Robert Winston, Vice Chair	P
Kate McDonald	P
Nathan Zipper	A
Ben Crenshaw	P
Scotty Bernick	P
Mary McGowan	P
Paige Parham	P
Dana Kose	P
Michael Walters Young	P
Matt Brown	P

Employees Present

Vernon Gerth, Assistant City Administrator
Emily Wright, Director of Planning & Sustainability
Amy Diaz-Barriga, Asst. Director of Planning & Sustainability
Tom Marsh, Director of Building & Neighborhood Services
Jimmy Wiseman, Asst. Director of Engineering
Paul Holzen, Director of Engineering
Bill Squires, Assistant City Attorney
Dillon Gaster, Management Fellow

The purpose of the regular meeting will be to discuss matters regarding Development Services and will include the following items:

Matt Bryant, Chair began the meeting at 8:02 am.

1. Approval of Minutes/Review of Meeting Notes from March 4, 2025, meeting.

- Meeting minutes were approved by acclamation.

2. Discussion on Next Steps from the Development Customer Survey.

- Katherine Harelson began the discussion by reminding the group of the Development Customer Survey and the recommendations made by the consultant to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.
 - The Board has since directed staff to focus on one of the key recommendations which was to take apart the different development services processes and analyze them for any potential “pinch points.”
- Amy Diaz-Barriga joined in that staff met internally to throw out ideas on how to best achieve this. One of the ideas was to try to do a better job of soliciting feedback throughout the process. One path to achieve this could be to provide QR codes to applicants throughout the process to gather that feedback. If someone is frustrated in the moment, we want their feedback as soon as possible.

- Dillon Gaster added that another idea was to start at the single-family building permit process. That process is simple enough that staff can work through an exercise and gradually build up to more complex processes.
- Paul Holzen asked if the QR codes would just be for design professionals because it's also important to get to the owners. As the project manager of large-scale infrastructure projects, he feels like sometimes he takes on the role as the "owner." Often, he finds that there is just miscommunication between the parties.
 - Jimmy Wiseman responded that staff discussed adding the owner into the process directly through GeoCivix. That way, the owner gets to see the comments on projects in real time.
 - Robert Winston suggested that a way to bring the owner in the process is to add an owner sign-off on reviews.
 - Matt Bryant pointed out that GeoCivix has a button that shows the status of a project, but it is not automated. Maybe, staff could find a way to automate that report to the owner.
- Amy pointed out that the original owner could likely sell the property at some point during the development process.
 - Scotty Bernick said it would be easy to add owners to the GeoCivix process. They won't get the automated emails, but they can log in and see the project status.
 - Paul added that staff needs to be intentional about how to approach owners. There are a lot of owners that prefer to let their team handle the project, others want more input.
 - Matt Bryant asked if it is easy to customize projects on GeoCivix. Amy responded that it is, but you have to go project by project. It would be best if a rule applied to all projects rather than just a handful.
- Mary McGowan said that one piece of the process that could be improved upon is the Traffic Impact Analysis. There isn't a set deadline for the TIA like other reviews. The only deadline is that it has to be completed by the time a project goes before Joint Conceptual Workshop.
 - Jimmy responded that staff has discussed it. It would require adding another step in the review process. Staff can look into adding the review to GeoCivix.
- Scotty also brought up looking at one stop submittals for development plans and site plans. They happen at different times of the month. It might be easier on the applicant side to have it all on the same day. There have been a few people caught off guard by that recently.
- Ben Crenshaw asked to go back to the discussion about adding owners into the communication of project status. He was curious how many people have owners that would be interested being involved at that level.
 - Mary said that in her experience, the local developers tend to be more interested in knowing exactly what is going on with a project. Out of state developers tend to be more hands off because they don't know Franklin's process.
 - Amy asked if it would be helpful to non-local developers for staff to reach out with a QR code ahead of time. Often, it seems like out of state developers will go straight to the top with complaints, and staff finds out about the issue later.
 - Scotty responded that out of town developers likely do that because of their experiences in other jurisdictions.
- Vernon Gerth said that communication is being highlighted heavily in this conversation. He proposed that staff looks at unraveling our processes, starting with a single-family building permit. He also said that the design professionals do a good job of keeping their clients informed on a project's status. He offered that staff could only notify the client when the project hasn't been completed according to schedule, such as when incomplete plans are submitted.
 - Paige Parham suggested that staff hold off on reaching out to the owner/client until the design professional has the chance to address the comments.

- Ben agreed that looking at the single-family process is a good step. He also suggested adding more complex processes like reviewing site plans. Staff could also use one of their projects as an example exercise.
 - Paul said that staff first looked at the Southeast Park project, and it was extremely helpful.
- Vernon asked if Aldermen Brown or Aldermen Caesar have any additional comments or concerns regarding this topic.
 - Aldermen Caesar said that he believes the reliance on emails between staff and the design professionals leave room for errors. He also sees a lot of misinformation on social media.
 - He asked if there is a way to create a public dashboard online that could help spread accurate information to the public and the development community while also protecting potentially confidential information.
 - Emily Wright said that there is a building permit map dashboard on the website. The feedback was that it has not been helpful, and the terminology that is used in GeoCivix is not as clear to the general public.
 - Scotty said that information needed by design professionals is generally very easy to find. If it is not on the website, staff will send all the information as they go through the process.
- Aldermen Brown said that the complaints he receives are from projects that are having big issues. Usually, it's between going through the process or writing a large check. Regarding social media, he said that the community is at a fever pitch right now. He has been out doing neighborhood meetings, and there is a lot of misinformation regarding developments.
 - He suggested that the City could increase social media posts and comments about growth and development. There needs to be more education regarding the development activity in the community.
 - The City can also focus more on using data to tell a story. In Planning's last development report, it showed a slower growth rate and fewer development approvals over the last four years.
 - He also added that the Return on Investment (ROI) study for annexations is incredibly important. The tool wouldn't be used as a decision maker, but it is a way to educate the public and provide more information.
- Vernon Gerth finished the conversation by saying that staff will share this feedback with the communications team. Staff will also take a look at the single-family permit process and make sure the process works smoothly for the applicant and staff.
- **Next meeting – Tuesday, June 3rd, 2025**

3. Adjourn.