

Permit Efficiency Review Task Force Modeling and Priorities Committees
Jay Watson's Conference Room
401 E. State St., Trenton
May 21, 2008
9:15 a.m.

Committee members present: Priorities Committee chairman Frank Banisch, Modeling Committee chairman Richard Johnson, Christine Foglio, Peter Kasabach, Susan Kraham, Mark Remsa, Joe Riggs, Gary Rose

Others present: Jeanne Herb, Marty Rosen, Eric Wachter, Jennifer Feltus

The Committee opened the meeting by discussing (i) the definition of those "priorities" which would characterize a project as "desirable", and (ii) establishing a "reward" process for projects that contain such priorities.

The discussion shifted to how projects that do not contain these priorities might be handled and if they would endure a lengthy review process. It was discussed that these projects would go through the standard review process, which itself is in need of improvement.

In an attempt to "re-think" the existing "production management" model at NJDEP, Johnson led the Committee into a discussion of "re-engineering" the permitting-review process, incorporating the following elements:

1. Objective criteria would be front-loaded, to allow for "fact-based" sorting of applications (project type, number of permits, "green" vs. not, completeness of application, etc.).
2. Pre-application meetings for large and/or complex projects would be encouraged to ensure that all required permits are properly applied for, and likely time frames are discussed. In order to respect the resource allocation challenge for NJDEP, an applicant could only request a pre-app meeting if (i) there is demonstrated municipal support for/action on the project, and (ii) the applicant has an equitable interest in the property.
3. Applications deemed administratively incomplete would be quickly rejected, while complete applications would advance. NJDEP staffers have stated that it currently takes more time to review a "bad" or incomplete application than it does a "good" one. By focusing an up-front review on "administrative elements" only, acting quickly and requiring incomplete applications to be resubmitted *with an additional fee*, the Committee thought that the quality of initial submissions would increase. As an aside, the committee discussed the potential for this administrative review to be accomplished by a third party, as is done in Virginia.
4. Administratively complete applications would then be divided by property type, into two categories (with working titles at the moment): (i) "single-home" applications and (ii) "all others". From the committee's review of the staffing booklets prepared for the first meeting, it is apparent that a great deal of staff time is devoted to review of issues associated with an individual homeowner's application, and that the technical expertise of the applicant as well as the "typical" scale of those applications warranted a separate review track (and likely dedicated staff).
5. After being sorted by property type, the applications would then be sorted by complexity of application: whether it was for (i) a single permit, or (ii) multiple permits.
6. After being sorted by complexity, the Committee recommended that two actions occur: (i) a DEP Case Manger should be assigned to the application, and (ii) the list of "Priorities" should

be applied to the application to determine whether the application should be approved or not. In the interest of time, the Committee decided it would discuss and develop the list of “Priorities” at its next meeting.

This re-engineered process would apply to “green” and standard projects. However, the Committee feels very strongly that the “green” projects should be the beneficiaries of a focused and quicker review, and will review “precedent” programs in other states and discuss these potential benefits at the next meeting.