CITY OF
Enumclaw

Date: Tuesday, May 25, 2021

RE: Electronic Permit Application Policy

Background: The City has implemented an electronic permitting system in response to industry changes, applicant feedback, and facilitating customer care during mandated COVID-19 office closures. This would facilitate the application of permits online, electronically as opposed to strictly over the counter. Electronic permitting allows applicants the flexibility and convenience of submitting permit applications electronically instead of only in-person. The ability to submit permit applications have been beneficial prior to, and during, the mandated COVID-19 office closure, with positive feedback from applicants.

Process overview: Currently, applicants submit permit applications via a City provided email address. The permit is input into the permit program and then city staff collects an application fee. Applicants with large digital files to upload are provided a link to ShareFile (an electronic file sharing system) by permit staff. There are various ways applicants can pay their intake fee. Typically, the intake fee is collected via payment by credit card over the phone. Other payment methods include mailing payment by check or depositing a check in the City's utility payment box at City Hall. The city currently does not have an online payment portal for applicants to submit permit applications and make payments online but planning for employing an online portal system is underway.

Issue: Most applicants pay the intake fee(s) when submitting a permit application. However, some applicants submit applications and do not pay the intake fee for weeks, and sometimes months. These applicants may believe they have made an application for a permit.

Enumclaw Municipal Code (EMC) section 15.04.020 defines what is an application:
"Application" means, at a minimum, a complete project description, site plan, and, if applicable, SEPA checklist. The community development director and/or the city engineer may require additional elements at their discretion.

Policy: A permit application is not considered applied for until the intake fee (if required) is paid with a completed application that includes the application form, required items listed on the application, and/or application checklist. Permit staff screens the submittal to determine if an application sufficient has been submitted. If the application is sufficient for intake, permit staff then contacts the applicant for payment.

The Community Development Department/Public Works office is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except holidays. The service counter is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and permit applications can only be made between 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Electronic permit applications made after 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, shall be considered applied for only after permit staff determines that the application is complete for intake and receives payment for the application.

If payment has not been made within seven (7) business days of permit staff contacting the applicant by email (or other means), the submittal will be deemed incomplete for intake. Application materials will be returned to the applicant, and the applicant will be informed that the application is rejected for intake due to non-payment.

This policy will also apply with the implementation of an online submittal/payment portal system.

Examples:

1. An applicant emails application materials to the city permitting email. Permit staff screens the submittal of application and materials and deems the application complete for intake. Permit staff contacts the applicant by email (or other means) for payment. The applicant pays by credit card over the phone by 4 p.m. on a business day, Monday through Friday. The application is then deemed applied for on that date.

2. An applicant emails application materials to the city permitting email. Permit staff screen the application submittal and materials on a business day, Monday through Friday, deeming the application complete for intake. Permit staff contacts the applicant by email (or other means) for payment. The applicant indicates that they will mail in the application fee. Two days later permit staff receives the check for payment before 4 p.m. on a business day, Monday through Friday. The application is then deemed applied for on that date.

3. An applicant submits a permit application and materials online through the City's future online portal system. The application materials are uploaded into the system and the application fee is paid. Permit staff screen the application submittal and materials on a business day, Monday through Friday, deeming the application complete for intake. Permit staff enters the application and materials into the permitting system and routes for review.

4. The applicant submits a permit application and materials to the City permitting email Permit staff screen the application submittal and materials on a business day, Monday through Friday, deeming the application complete for intake. Permit staff contacts the applicant by email (or other means) for payment. The applicant does not make payment by any method within seven (7) business days. The application materials will be returned to the applicant, and the applicant will be informed that the application is incomplete for intake due to non-payment. The application will be voided in PermitTrax if the application was input into the system as part of application intake.

5. An applicant submits a permit application and materials online through the City's future online portal system. The application materials are uploaded into the system and intake fee is unpaid. Permit staff contacts the applicant informing him/her that the fee must be paid within 7 days for permit staff to be able to continue screening the submittal for intake.

All days shall be business days.

Chris Pasinetti
Community Development Director