



## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF MADERA

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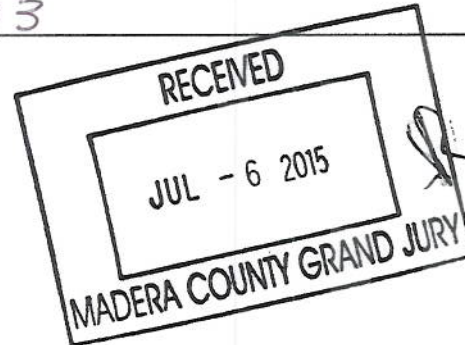
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#1415-03

May 12, 2015

The Honorable Ernest J. LiCalsi  
Presiding Judge  
Madera, County Superior Court  
209 W. Yosemite Avenue  
Madera, CA 93637



**Subject: Response to the 2014-15 Grand Jury Final Report entitled "Madera County Planning Division."**

Honorable Judge LiCalsi:

Pursuant to the California Penal Code 933.05, the Madera County Board of Supervisors submits this response to the findings and recommendations in the 2014-15 Madera County Grand Jury Final Report entitled, "Madera County Planning Division." See Attachment #1.

The following are the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations and the Board of Supervisors' responses:

Finding 1:

In 2014-15 the Planning, Environmental Health and Fire Prevention Divisions were realigned under the Community and Economic Development Department. Prior to this time the Madera County Planning Department was part of the Madera County Resource Management Agency (RMA), a service agency that facilitated development for Madera County.

Response:

Agree with the finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (1).

Finding 2:

The reorganization of the Planning Division was initiated and implemented by the Board of Supervisors for economic and operational efficiency.

Response:

Agree with the finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (1).

Finding 3:

Some of the information on the Planning Division web page is outdated, inaccurate and does not reflect the Division's reorganization under the Community and Economic Development Department.

Response:

Agree with the finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (1).

Finding 4:

The Division's Procedure Manual and job descriptions were reviewed and are appropriate and well written.

Response:

Agree with the finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (1).

Finding 5:

Certain staffing positions remain unfilled due to employee turnover, the ongoing implementation of the department reorganization and allocated funding of designated positions.

Response:

Agree with the finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (1).

Finding 6:

Increased revenue from grants and planning services has substantially reduced the net cost to the County for the Planning Division operations.

Response:

Agree with the finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (1).

Finding 7:

Staff morale appears good. Issues include insufficient managerial and staff training, employee orientation and changes in work load. These problems are likely due to the reorganization. Recent staff promotions from within are positive.

Response:

Agree with the finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (1).

Finding 8:

Online programs for certain building permit requests and code enforcement complaints have been improved on the Division's website. The 311 Call Center can also be used in the application process.

Response:

Agree with the finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (1).

Finding 9:

The Division has reduced the waiting time for certain building permit approvals from 200 days to 60 days.

Response:

Agree with the finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (1).

Finding 10:

The Planning Division made several updates to the General Plan including:

- a. updating of the airport plan,
- b. zoning changes to water and agricultural provisions,
- c. rewriting of local environmental and flood plans,

d. adding air quality and housing elements mandated by the State.

Response:

Agree with the finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (1).

Finding 11:

The downturn in the economy and building industry has affected staff workloads, resulting in fewer specific building permit requests and site plan reviews. At the same time there has been an increase in workloads for code enforcement staff resulting in more reactionary responses to critical requests.

Response:

Agree with the finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (1).

Finding 12:

The merging of the Planning Division and the Building Inspection Division has resulted in the need for additional clerical support.

Response:

Agree with the finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (1).

Recommendation 1:

Update the Division's website to reflect new organizational structure and services available to the public.

Response:

The recommendation has been implemented. The Planning Division has been working with the Information Technology Department for the past 8 months and an update to the County website identifying the new Community and Economic Development organizational structure was recently released. The Planning Division will continue to work to make the website more accessible to the public.

Recommendation 2:

Solicit recommendations from staff to improve teamwork, communication and work efficiencies.

Response:

The recommendation has been implemented. The Planning Division has implemented a weekly staff meeting for all employees in order to discuss current issues and the future of the Division.

Recommendation 3:

Strengthen management skills of supervisors and evaluate performance levels.

Response:

The recommendation has been implemented. The Division recently sent over half of the management staff to training designed to strengthen skills in dealing with "difficult" people. The Division will continue to seek out training opportunities for senior level management staff.

Recommendation 4:

Implement a practical and user friendly system to solicit, review and respond to customer complaints. Evaluate the usefulness of the current Comment Box located at the office counter.

Response:

The recommendation has been implemented. The Director has initiated a telephone feedback program wherein employees will call customers to follow up and confirm that they received the necessary answers.

Recommendation 5:

Develop a public awareness program to educate the community on how to comply with building and land use regulations.

Response:

The recommendation has been implemented and also requires further analysis. Recently, the division prepared a flyer related to code enforcement issues which was distributed at community meetings in Firebaugh and Fairmead. The Division will continue with this effort and is currently developing a similar program in order to provide information to local property management agencies to ensure that tenants are complying with local ordinances. The Division will continue to develop programs in order to educate the community with respect to regulations.

Recommendation 6:

Implement an appointment system to facilitate access of the public to services of the department.

Response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Staff is currently working on developing a time for the public to come and meet with all Divisions within Community and Economic Development.

Recommendation 7:

Hire additional clerical staff to support the planners.

Response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. The Division has recently entered into the recruitment process to hire a Planning Technician who will directly serve the day-to-day tasks of the Planners. The individual will be primarily responsible for filing and serving at the front counter.

Recommendation 8:

Complete the implementation of the reorganization plan.

Response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Implementation of the reorganization is ongoing. Recently, a Deputy Director for the Division was appointed.

Sincerely,



David Rogers, Chairman

Madera County Board of Supervisors

Attachments