

TO: Village Council and Mayor Brown
FROM: Finance Committee, Rob Bartlett - Chair
RE: Building Department Structure and Fee Schedule
DATE: April 6, 2021

The Finance Committee met on Tuesday, April 6, 2021 at 4:00 pm via video to discuss a potential new organization structure for the Building Department and a new fee schedule. Present at the meeting were Finance Committee members Rob Bartlett, Kelly Rankin and Joe Stelzer, Mayor Bill Brown, and Assistant to the Building Commissioner Aileen Beatty.

Over the past three years, Building Department expenses have exceeded the fees collected by over \$40,700/year. The Finance Committee has benchmarked our Building Department versus other communities. Mariemont is currently paying four people to do this work, with the Building Commissioner being a salaried role. Terrace Park, Newtown, Fairfax and Columbia Township all have fewer people in their Building Departments and all of their Building Department roles are paid on an hourly basis. The main difference between Newtown and the other municipalities is Newtown has contracted with a company called XPEX to handle all technical plan reviews and inspections, whereas the other communities have contracted with Hamilton County.

The Finance Committee is recommending the following organization changes to the Building Department:

1. Create the role of Zoning Officer, similar to the other communities. For now, the Zoning Officer would continue to handle administrative and zoning matters. Fairfax pays their Zoning Officer \$20/hour. Terrace Park does not pay their Zoning Officer. Newtown's Village Office handles the Zoning Officer responsibilities. The Finance Committee recommends paying this role \$20/hour.
2. Contract with XPEX to handle all technical building matters. The Finance Committee has talked with XPEX and with Newtown council members, and we believe XPEX will provide very good customer service. Attached is a copy of a standard XPEX contract.

The Building Department will continue to operate as they are today, without set office hours. Instead, both XPEX and the Zoning Officer will be available to schedule meetings at the Municipal Building or at another location whenever is necessary.

The Finance Committee is also recommending some changes to the fee schedule, which has not been updated since February 2011. First, we are recommending instituting a \$100 application fee for any building permits to pay for the initial work required of the Zoning Officer. Second, for any work that XPEX does, XPEX will provide an estimate of the total cost of their work. This cost estimate will be based on an hourly rate, depending on the skills required for that specific job. Mariemont will add 10% on to the XPEX estimate for zoning code review and other administrative costs. And Mariemont will also include a state fee that we will collect and pass on to Columbus. The state fee is 1% for residential work and 3% for commercial work.

If the resident decides to proceed with the project, Mariemont will collect the estimated fee from the resident. If there are any changes to the plans, then the fees will be updated as well. Once XPEX has completed its work, they will bill Mariemont for the actual cost. A process will be set up to track the estimated and actual costs to ensure the difference is minimal in total. Attached is a list of the activities within the Building Department that XPEX will be responsible for, what the current minimum fee is for this work, and how the new proposed fee would be determined.

The Finance Committee will monitor this work and fine tune XPEX's responsibilities as necessary. If any other fee changes are required, those will come to Council. Aileen Beatty has also agreed to develop written policies and procedures for the new restructured Building Department.

The Finance Committee believes there are additional opportunities to become more cost efficient in the Building Department, as well as revisiting which items should require a permit, what the appropriate fee should be

in a more cost optimized process, and what the fines should be for people who do not obtain the proper permits. However, we would like to focus first on stabilizing the new structure with XPEX before introducing any other changes, so we will likely wait until later this summer before presenting additional recommendations to council.

If council agrees to this initial recommendation, the Village Solicitor will draw up the necessary legislation to update the Building Department fee schedule for those items involving XPEX. Once the necessary legislation has been passed, the Mayor, Village Solicitor and Fiscal Officer would then sign the contract with XPEX. The Finance Committee will provide a more detailed definition of the Zoning Officer role for council to review and approve, so the appropriate legislation can be drawn up by the Village Solicitor for that role.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rob Bartlett, Chairman

Kelly Rankin, Vice-Chairman

Joe Stelzer, Member

Attachment

	Who	Mariemont Current Min	Mariemont Proposed	
Permits				
Plan Review	XPEX	\$50/hour	\$/hour	
Additions & New Works - Residential	XPEX	\$268 (\$/sq ft)	\$/hour	
Additions & New Works - Commercial	XPEX	\$446 (\$/sq ft)	\$/hour	
Demolition	XPEX	\$38 (\$/sq ft)	\$/hour	
Alterations - Residential	XPEX	\$180 (\$/sq ft)	\$/hour	
Alterations - Commercial	XPEX	\$360 (\$/sq ft)	\$/hour	
Fire Suppression System	XPEX	\$268 (\$/sq ft)	\$/hour	
Fire Alarm System	XPEX	\$164 (\$/sq ft)	\$/hour	
Accessory structures >200 sf	XPEX	\$180	\$/hour	
Commercial Signage	XPEX	\$95	\$/hour	
Decks, Ramps	XPEX	\$173	\$/hour	
Building	Heating and Airconditioning - Commercial	XPEX	\$300	\$/hour
	Heating and Airconditioning - Residential	XPEX	\$145	\$/hour
	Heating or Airconditioning - Commercial	XPEX	\$250	\$/hour
	Heating or Airconditioning - Residential	XPEX	\$95	\$/hour
	Public Sidewalk (repair or alteration)	XPEX	\$70	\$/hour
	Retaining Wall	XPEX	\$95	\$/hour
	Solar Panels	XPEX	\$150	\$/hour
	Certificate of Occupancy	XPEX	\$60	\$/hour
	Tent (size??)	XPEX	\$25	\$/hour

XPEX Rates

- \$70/hour for Certified Building Official
- \$65/hour for Certified plan review services
- \$60/hour for Building Inspection Services

Fees in addition to XPEX

- \$100 application fee
- +10% of XPEX cost for zoning review and all other administrative costs
- +1% State fee for residential permits and +3% State fee for commercial permits