

Vetoed: 12/21/98

12/08/98

JANE HAGUE
ROB MCKENNA
CHRISTOPHER VANCE
PETE VON REICHBAUER
BRIAN DERDOWSKI
Kent Pullen

Introduced By:

DDESINFOIRDKP6.DOC/cmm

Proposed No.:

98-506

ORDINANCE NO. **13379**

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AN ORDINANCE relating to customer service and the dissemination of clear and easily understandable information to the public via its Internet web page by the department of development and environmental services, specifying, in general, the types of information most likely to be of use to the general public, and calling for the department to survey the public from time to time to determine the public's information needs.

PREAMBLE: The King County council recognizes the good work that the department of development and environmental services has been doing to improve its ability to meet the needs of its customers. It also recognizes that the strides made to date should not be lost should future changes in administration decide to focus on priorities other than customer service. To that end, the council finds that the improvements already underway in providing better and more clear information to the public on the department's web pages need to be institutionalized and made permanent. Changes made by future administrations may lead to customer service receiving less emphasis than at present. In addition, present land use ordinances and regulations are generally perceived by the public as being too complex to be easily understood and too cumbersome to respond to their informational needs in a convenient and expeditious manner. It is difficult for members of the public who wish to initiate a building or land use-related action to learn what the ultimate costs of doing so might be. Too often, citizens learn that the costs of actions they have initiated are prohibitive when it is too late for them to either modify their plans or terminate the actions. One of the fundamental responsibilities of government is to provide clear, easily understood, up-to-date information which citizens will find useful in their personal decision-making. The advent

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of technology, coupled with an increasing awareness that citizens are to be accorded service commensurate with their status as taxpayers, affords the county the opportunity to make it increasingly easier for citizens to find out information that they need in order to make decisions about building and land use actions they may wish to initiate. The use of new technology also places a responsibility on the county to find out from the public what types of information it needs in order to make informed building and land use-related decisions.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Information to be included on the department of development and environmental services web page.

A. This ordinance recognizes the efforts of the department of development and environmental services to provide key information to the public via its internet web pages. It is the policy of the county that the provision of building and land use-related information by means of this technology shall continue.

B. The department should continue to provide specific information on its web pages covering general informational categories such as the following:

- 1. public information
- 2. permit information
- 3. property information
- 4. permits of special interest
- 5. division and section home pages.

C. Under the general categories listed above, examples of the information the department shall provide are, but are not limited to:

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1. the text of any and all land use ordinances enacted into law and presently in effect.
2. the text of any proposed amendment to any existing land use-related ordinance presently in effect.
3. the text of any permitting guides outlining and explaining in clear and comprehensible terms the processes needed for permit approval.
4. a schedule of fees required for all aspects of the permitting process, which schedule shall be updated as often as may be necessary.
5. a search engine to allow citizens to identify issued permits.
6. a query function to allow citizens to monitor the status of permits in progress.

D. The search engine to allow citizens to identify issued permits and a query function to allow citizens to monitor the status of permits in progress shall be available online no later than December 31, 2001.

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SECTION 2. Periodic public surveys. The department shall, from time to time, survey the users of its services to determine the adequacy of the information contained in its web page, determine what additional information may be of use to its customers and determine what new information should be included in order to better serve its users.

INTRODUCED AND READ for the first time this 24th day of August, 1998.

PASSED by a vote of 7 to 6 this 14th day of December, 1998.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Louise Miller
Chair

ATTEST:

Zimmerman
Clerk of the Council

~~APPROVED~~ this 21 day of December, 1998
Vetoed

Donald A. Davis
King County Executive

Attachments:



King County Executive
RON SIMS

RECEIVED
98 DEC 21 PM 1:55
CLERK
KING COUNTY COUNCIL

December 21, 1998

The Honorable Louise Miller
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
COURTHOUSE

Dear Councilmember Miller:

By this letter I am vetoing Ordinance 13378 and Ordinance 13379, relating to customer service at the Department of Development and Environmental Services. These ordinances were adopted by the King County Council on December 14, 1998.

I fully support the Council's goal of enhancing customer service at DDES. Indeed, as County Executive, I am committed to providing excellent service through all county agencies to all residents of King County.

Nevertheless, these ordinances are not appropriate tools by which to ensure the most responsive DDES customer service now and in the future. The detailed requirements of these ordinances would be legally binding on the Department until such time as they might be formally amended or repealed. This translates into unnecessary and unacceptable micromanagement of an Executive agency by the Council.

I understand that the often-complex building and land-use permit processes can be frustrating for many customers, including Councilmembers seeking to respond to constituents' concerns. Providing consistently high-quality customer service at DDES is a priority for both DDES management and myself. To that end, the Department has established many improvements in recent years and is continuing to evaluate numerous aspects of its operation with an eye to maximizing efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Following are several examples of the Department's recent customer service initiatives. The Department provided a comprehensive list in its final report to the Council regarding implementation of Ordinance 12196 (October 23, 1998).

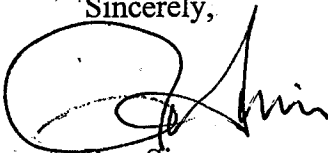


The Honorable Louise Miller
December 21, 1998
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- The DDES web site (www.metrokc.gov/DDES/) currently provides permit information, zoning and land use maps, regulations and policies affecting land use and building activities, classes offered by DDES and upcoming public meetings sponsored by DDES.
- An on-call "planner of the day" meets with walk-in customers who do not have appointments.
- Adding more customer appointment times each day has reduced appointment wait time from five weeks to 10 days.
- Three satellite offices at Fall City, Vashon and Lake Wilderness issue some permits and provide other services to customers in these outlying areas.
- Next-day inspections remain a priority, even as workload has increased.

The discussion surrounding Ordinances 13378 and 13379 by Executive and Council elicited many good ideas, and I welcome a continuation of the dialogue. In that spirit, I have asked DDES to continue its good work on customer service and to provide the Council with an update on its activities during 1999.

Sincerely,



Ron Sims
King County Executive

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Steve Ohlenkamp, Chief of Staff

Shelley Sutton, Policy Staff Director

Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Robert Derrick, Director, Department of Development and Environmental Services