Soliciting in the City of Port Orchard

-Brandy Rinearson, CMC, City Clerk

Peddler’s are required to obtain a license in order to sell or offer to sell any goods in the City of Port Orchard.

What is a Peddler?
A "Peddler" is a person who sells goods while traveling from house to house or from place to place; upon any street, highway, or public place within the City.

Who is considered a Peddler?
Any person who is soliciting or taking orders for the purchase or sale of goods, wares or merchandise, articles, things or personal property of whatsoever name, nature or description to be delivered in the future.

Who is exempt from obtaining a Peddler’s License?
Agricultural, horticultural or farm products which they may grow or raise; and vendors of books, periodicals or newspapers are exempt from obtaining a license.

What are some safety tips for when a Peddler is at your door?
As a general practice, residents should treat peddlers/solicitors like they would any stranger: with caution and awareness. Help stop unpermitted soliciting activity in your neighborhood, and protect yourself and your home with the tips below:

- Always verbally respond to a knock or doorbell ring, and DO NOT automatically open the door. Keep in mind that the only way to assure an ill-intentioned “solicitor” does not peek or barge into your home is to not open the door.
- Solicitors must carry a valid Peddler’s license issued by the City Clerk’s office when they conduct their activities and respect “No Soliciting” signs.
- Obtain a good description of him or her; use your peephole or windows.
- Inform your neighborhood watch group and share descriptive information about soliciting activity you encounter or witness. Remind neighbors to report suspicious persons and situations to the police.

Contact the authorities if you think a solicitor:
- does not have a permit;
- becomes confrontational;
- asks personal questions, makes personal/sexual comments, or makes demands;
- exhibits suspicious behavior, such as nervousness and furtive glances around your home; and/or makes you feel uncomfortable for any reason.

For more information see the Port Orchard Municipal Code Chapter 5.44 or contact City Hall at (360) 876-4407.

Why do some permits take longer than others?
Tom Bonsell, Associate Planner

The City of Port Orchard planning staff is a group of professionals that have many years of experience in the field of municipal planning. As land use planners, staff has observed that some land-use permits can take more

Upcoming Events
- Concerts by the Bay, Thursdays, Waterfront Park Gazebo, 6:30-8:00pm
- Port Orchard Farmers Market, Saturdays, 9:00am-3:00pm, Downtown
- Annapolis Sunday Market, Sundays, 12-5pm, 2065 Bay Street
- Chris Craft 25th Rendezvous, July 11-13, Port Orchard Marina
- FOE 4th Annual Car Show & Shine, July 12, 10:00am-4:00pm, 4001 Jackson Ave SE
- Work Study Session, July 15, and Council Meeting, July 22, City Hall, 7:00pm
- Mustangs on the Waterfront, July 27, Downtown
- Port Orchard First Saturday Art Walk, August 2, 2:00-5:00pm, Downtown
- Live to Ride, August 3, Downtown
processing time than others although they may be similar in nature. Some project approval processes are linear and relatively quick, while other permits start and stop and can take longer to process. This observation is more than a result of the complexity of the project, but rather involves other less tangible factors that will be discussed here.

Often, the amount of time required to review an application comes down to the quality of the application submitted. Some applications are succinct yet detailed and are very easy to review for code compliance, while other applications contain unnecessary information, low quality plans and drawings, and leave staff with more questions than answers.

One of the best ways to ensure speedy review is to schedule a pre-application conference with the City to better understand the City’s requirements for a particular project. For some projects, a pre-application conference is required and for others it is voluntary. A pre-application conference is a meeting with a project applicant and his representatives and with City staff, fire district staff, and other agencies depending on the application. In this meeting, the applicant typically provides a project summary and project details to help the City understand what he or she is trying to accomplish. The City staff then discusses the project with the applicant highlighting code requirements and concerns. The details of the meeting are then summarized into a pre-application letter recapping the meeting and the City’s comments on the proposed project. Pre-application meetings can be broad discussions with broad responses from the City, or detailed proposals with detailed responses from the City. Applicants generally receive what they put into the meeting in terms of level of detail. In some cases, more than one pre-application meeting may be needed as a project proposal becomes more refined. The biggest take away from the pre-application meeting is the pre-application letter which details application submittal requirements and concerns. The details of the meeting are then summarized into a pre-application letter recapping the meeting and the City’s comments on the proposed project. Pre-application meetings can be broad discussions with broad responses from the City, or detailed proposals with detailed responses from the City. Applicants generally receive what they put into the meeting in terms of level of detail. In some cases, more than one pre-application meeting may be needed as a project proposal becomes more refined. The biggest take away from the pre-application meeting is the pre-application letter which details application submittal requirements and concerns. Typically, project review goes more smoothly when an applicant is clearly able to address all of the issues provided in the pre-application letter in their application submittal.

An applicant is not expected to know all of the municipal code; however, an applicant should make an attempt to learn all they can before preparing or submitting an application. Planning staff is always available to answer code questions, but part of the reason for a pre-application conference is to help the applicant be somewhat aware of codes that affect the proposal.

Another factor which can contribute to the quality of an application submittal is the consultant used to prepare various parts of an application. Many projects will require professional assistance from surveyors, engineers, traffic engineers, environmental consultants, geologists, architects, and/or landscape architects. City staff has observed varying degrees of quality depending on the professionals used in the application process. As is often the case, you get what you pay for and if time is of the essence, some consultants perform well and others do not.

When it comes time to submit an application, applicants must ensure that their submittal is complete. Applicants need to be sure to submit an application with the proper number of copies and the checklist on the application page completed. When a project application is submitted, a planner will review the project to ensure that it is counter complete. This will ensure that all the information mentioned at the pre-application conference and the standard requirements by code are being submitted. After the application has been submitted to the City, it is transmitted to applicable departments. It is at this point where the biggest delays can occur. Many projects require technical reports. While a report may have been submitted, it may still be incomplete or sub-standard. In this case, a formal letter of “incomplete application” will be issued stating what additional information is required as well as a timeline for required submittal.

During the application process, questions about the project always arise. Phone communication is great but email is better. Email allows for documentation, timely responses and tracking for both the applicant and staff. In conclusion, to minimize land-use application processing time the following should be considered:

1. Even if not required by code, talk to staff about the benefits of a pre-application conference.
2. Submit as much data as possible for the pre-application conference.
3. Read the applicable code sections and try to gain a rudimentary understanding of the code.
4. Hire qualified competent consultants.
5. Follow directions on the application form and submit a complete application which responds to the pre-application letter.
6. Maintain frequent communication with your assigned planner.
7. Land use actions have required timelines for review, comment and appeal periods, so have patience.