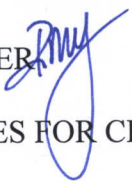


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 6, 2012
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER 
SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF REDUCED FEES FOR CERTAIN HISTORIC DISTRICT APPLICATIONS

ISSUE: Consideration of proposed fee reductions charged by the Department of Planning & Zoning for certain applications in the historic districts.

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council adopt the attached amendments to the Planning and Zoning fee schedule for certain applications in the Historic District.

BACKGROUND: In 2008, City Council adopted a new fee schedule, raising a variety of Planning and Zoning fees. The new fees were proposed to better offset actual costs of the Department's work program. Included in the long list of application types for which fees were raised were fees for BAR applications.

Since that time, a series of actions has reduced some fees for some BAR cases. In late 2009 Council agreed to reduce the fee for all sign applications in the historic districts and to reduce the fees for administrative BAR approval. In 2010 and 2011, a number of new BAR policies were also adopted which have made the BAR process more efficient and certain, and in many cases, more affordable. Most significant has been the creation of an extensive staff-level BAR administrative approval process, which provides an alternative to a full BAR hearing for a series of common home improvements such as replacement of windows, roofing, siding, exterior lights, and doors. The process is relatively quick, requiring only a two page application, a \$75 fee, and no more than one or two days for review and approval. While the administrative approvals do not result in a substantial reduction in work for staff, they have been very positively received by the community and allow the Boards to spend time on larger, more significant projects. They also require a much lower application fee than if a BAR hearing were required. Since 2010, over 350 administrative applications have been approved, comprising approximately 50% of all BAR cases.

Despite these positive changes, BAR Staff, BAR members, and the public, have consistently expressed concern that the BAR fees charged for some *residential projects* are still too high and

