

Legislation Text

File #: 21-234, **Version:** 1

Presenter

Robert Camareno, City Manager
rcamareno@nbtexas.org

SUBJECT:

Discuss and consider approval of an ordinance regarding the ratification of a waiver of certain permit fees and solid waste management fees related to the 2021 winter storm.

BACKGROUND / RATIONALE:

Council District: All

Staff Contacts: KC Collins, Building Official
(830) 221-4062
kcollins@nbtexas.org

Mike Mundell, Solid Waste Manager
(830) 221-4044
mmundell@nbtexas.org

The City of New Braunfels was impacted by unprecedented weather the week of February 15-19, 2021 that resulted in multiple days of below freezing temperatures. As a result, trash pickup services throughout the community were impacted and many residents experienced frozen pipes resulting in property damage.

The City of New Braunfels has implemented several initiatives to ease the impacts to the community related to the storm damage:

- Waiving of fees for permits associated with projects resulting from storm damage.
- Expediting of the above permits.
- Solid waste management fees will be waived the week of February 15-19, 2021.

Plumbing permits are typically applied for by plumbers or plumbing contractors. Pursuant to the International Plumbing Code (IPC), plumbing repairs due to leaks are exempt from permits, so long as the leak is unconcealed. Therefore, the proposed waivers would apply to concealed leaks/repairs. The Plumbing Permit Application (see Resources section below) lists all of the different elements of plumbing permits and corresponding fees.

Since irrigation (sprinkler systems) can also be impacted by freezing temperatures, these permit fees are also proposed for waiver. They include:

- Application Fee - \$15
- Backflow Preventer - \$5

- Each Head - \$2

Thus far, staff has waived seven irrigation permit fees for backflow preventer damage.

Residential alterations and repairs may be needed due to leaking or broken pipes. A fee breakdown for these types of permits includes:

- Application Fee - \$50
- Plan Review Fee - 25% of permit cost, not to exceed \$2,500
- Permit Fee - \$.25 per square foot of work area

No permit applications for this type of work have yet been received.

Commercial alteration and repairs break down as follows:

- Application Fee - \$100
- Plan Review Fee - 25% of permit cost, not to exceed \$2,500
- Permit Fee - Based on valuation and in tiers: Initial tier \$0 to \$50,000 in valuation = \$50 plus \$6 per \$1,000 of valuation or fraction thereof

No permit applications for this type of work have yet been received.

It typically takes staff two days to review and issue simple trade permits, such as plumbing and irrigation permits. The process begins with the applicant (licensed/registered plumber) submitting the application online or over the counter. Staff can expedite these to being reviewed and approved over the counter, as long as the contractor is registered or has their proper registration paperwork on hand.

Residential and commercial alteration permits fall into the 10-day and 20-day cycle time goals respectively. To expedite, we can complete these in 5 to 7 days, as long as the plans are complete and meet the adopted ordinances.

To accomplish expediting as described above, rather than reviewing first come-first served, staff will move review of these types of permits to the front of the line (or “top of the stack”) above all other building permit applications. We are asking applicants to notify the City on the application paperwork that the repair/alteration is due to severe weather damage.

ADDRESSES A NEED/ISSUE IN A CITY PLAN OR COUNCIL PRIORITY:

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| Envision New Braunfels Comprehensive Plan | Action 3.6: Pro-actively provide a regulatory environment that remains business and resident friendly. |
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FISCAL IMPACT:

Permit fees proposed to be waived would not have been collected had the extreme winter weather not occurred. This coupled with the fact that these specific fees and associated time spent delivering the corresponding services are minimal, this proposal is anticipated to have a negligible impact on the General Fund. Regarding Solid Waste Management Fees, the net impact of the credit and reduced operating costs from not providing services for approximately one week, is also expected to be immaterial and will be supported from excess reserves.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

Not applicable.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval.

RESOURCES:

- Plumbing Permit application:
<http://www.nbtexas.org/DocumentCenter/View/1062/Plumbing-application-and-fees?bidId=>>
- Residential permit information and fees:
<http://www.nbtexas.org/1177/Do-I-Need-a-Residential-Permit>>

ATTACHMENTS:

- Ordinance