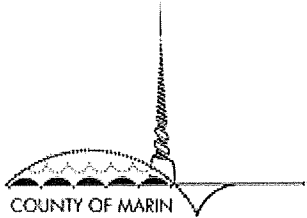


Jennifer Blackman

From: County of Marin <camarin@public.govdelivery.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2023 2:46 PM
To: Jennifer Blackman
Subject: County Appoints Permit Ombudsperson



NEWS RELEASE

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County Appoints Permit Ombudsperson

Impartial advocate to help troubleshoot the intricacies of permitting process

San Rafael, CA – A major customer service improvement has debuted at the County of Marin with the appointment of a dedicated specialist poised to assist those seeking a building permit from the Community Development Agency (CDA). The newly established position will play a pivotal role in improving internal processes, addressing concerns, and providing guidance to ensure compliance with regulations.

Cristy Stanley, a longtime supervisor in CDA's Code Compliance Division, was appointed to the position and started in late August. She has worked at the County of Marin since 1988.

Permits are issued to ensure structures are safe and constructed with minimal impacts to the environment and neighbors. However, the review process is complex and

requires input from multiple County departments. In the new role, Stanley is engaging with the permit process across departments and divisions, including CDA's Planning, Building, Environmental Health Services, and Code Enforcement divisions. Her goal is twofold: 1) advance permit requests that are seemingly stuck in the review or approval process, and; 2) identify systemic problems and facilitate process improvements.

"The goal is to eliminate the difficulties in issuing building permits while lowering overall costs and frustration for the applicants," said CDA Director Sarah Jones. "Some building projects are challenging, and those permits will inevitably require lengthy and close review, but we can make sure that we're not making an inherently difficult process more difficult through our practices."

The benefit of a Permit Ombudsperson was first highlighted in an audit of CDA about 10 years ago. By adding the role, Jones said she hopes for a more seamless, accessible, and user-centric permitting process.

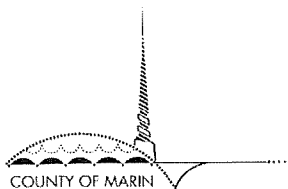
"An important metric will be the actual number of changes in processes or practices that come as a result of tracking and addressing any systemic permitting issues," Jones said. "We know that changes are needed, and we're pleased to have a way to be certain that the changes we make are the ones that will be effective and get to the heart of situations that permit applicants face."

For the most part, rather than being a standard part of project intake and staffing, Stanley will work with County reviewers and focus on permit facilitation on an as-needed basis. Jones said there might be especially complex projects with which the ombudsman service is involved from the beginning to facilitate an expedited review process.

Those looking into a building permit with the County can start by [finding documents online](#).

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