

CHAPTER 2024-210

Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 812

An act relating to expedited approval of residential building permits; creating s. 177.073, F.S.; providing definitions; requiring certain governing bodies, by a date certain, to each create a program to expedite the process for issuing residential building permits before a final plat is recorded; requiring the expedited process to include a certain application; prohibiting the application or local government final approval from altering or restricting the number of building permits requested under certain circumstances; requiring certain governing bodies to update their program in a specified manner; providing applicability; requiring a governing body to create certain processes for purposes of the program; authorizing applicants to use a private provider to expedite the process for certain building permits; requiring a governing body to establish a registry of qualified contractors for a specified purpose; prohibiting such qualified contractors hired to review an application from having a conflict of interest with the applicant; defining the term “conflict of interest”; authorizing a governing body to issue addresses and temporary parcel identification numbers for specified purposes; requiring a governing body to issue a specified number or percentage of building permits requested in an application when certain conditions are met; setting forth certain conditions for applicants who apply to the program; providing that an applicant has a vested right in an approved preliminary plat when certain conditions are met; prohibiting a governing body from making substantive changes to a preliminary plat without written consent; requiring an applicant to indemnify and hold harmless certain entities and persons; providing an exception; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 177.073, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

177.073 Expedited approval of residential building permits before a final plat is recorded.—

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) “Applicant” means a homebuilder or developer who files an application with the local governing body to identify the percentage of planned homes, or the number of building permits, that the local governing body must issue for a residential subdivision or planned community.

(b) “Final plat” means the final tracing, map, or site plan presented by the subdivider to a governing body for final approval, and, upon approval by the appropriate governing body, is submitted to the clerk of the circuit court for recording.

(c) “Local building official” has the same meaning as in s. 553.791(1).

(d) “Plans” means any building plans, construction plans, engineering plans, or site plans, or their functional equivalent, submitted by an applicant for a building permit.

(e) “Preliminary plat” means a map or delineated representation of the subdivision of lands that is a complete and exact representation of the residential subdivision or planned community and contains any additional information needed to be in compliance with the requirements of this chapter.

(f) “Qualified contractor” includes, but is not limited to, an engineer or engineering firm licensed under chapter 471; a surveyor or mapper or a surveyor’s or mapper’s firm licensed under chapter 472; an architect or architecture firm licensed under part I of chapter 481; a landscape architect or landscape architecture firm registered under part II of chapter 481; or any other qualified professional who is certified in urban planning or environmental management.

(2)(a) By October 1, 2024, the governing body of a county that has 75,000 residents or more and any governing body of a municipality that has 10,000 residents or more and 25 acres or more of contiguous land that the local government has designated in the local government’s comprehensive plan and future land use map as land that is agricultural or to be developed for residential purposes shall create a program to expedite the process for issuing building permits for residential subdivisions or planned communities in accordance with the Florida Building Code and this section before a final plat is recorded with the clerk of the circuit court. The expedited process must include an application for an applicant to identify the percentage of planned homes, not to exceed 50 percent of the residential subdivision or planned community, or the number of building permits that the governing body must issue for the residential subdivision or planned community. The application or the local government’s final approval may not alter or restrict the applicant from receiving the number of building permits requested, so long as the request does not exceed 50 percent of the planned homes of the residential subdivision or planned community or the number of building permits. This paragraph does not:

1. Restrict the governing body from issuing more than 50 percent of the building permits for the residential subdivision or planned community.

2. Apply to a county subject to s. 380.0552.

(b) A governing body that had a program in place before July 1, 2023, to expedite the building permit process, need only update their program to approve an applicant’s written application to issue up to 50 percent of the building permits for the residential subdivision or planned community in order to comply with this section. This paragraph does not restrict a

governing body from issuing more than 50 percent of the building permits for the residential subdivision or planned community.

(c) By December 31, 2027, the governing body of a county that has 75,000 residents or more and any governing body of a municipality that has 10,000 residents or more and 25 acres or more of contiguous land that the local government has designated in the local government's comprehensive plan and future land use map as land that is agricultural or to be developed for residential purposes shall update their programs to expedite the process for issuing building permits for residential subdivisions or planned communities in accordance with the Florida Building Code and this section before a final plat is recorded with the clerk of the circuit court. The expedited process must include an application for an applicant to identify the percentage of planned homes, not to exceed 75 percent of the residential subdivision or planned community, or the number of building permits that the governing body must issue for the residential subdivision or planned community. This paragraph does not:

1. Restrict the governing body from issuing more than 75 percent of the building permits for the residential subdivision or planned community.

2. Apply to a county subject to s. 380.0552.

(3) A governing body shall create:

(a) A two-step application process for the adoption of a preliminary plat, inclusive of any plans, in order to expedite the issuance of building permits under this section. The application must allow an applicant to identify the percentage of planned homes or the number of building permits that the governing body must issue for the residential subdivision or planned community.

(b) A master building permit process consistent with s. 553.794 for applicants seeking multiple building permits for residential subdivisions or planned communities. For purposes of this paragraph, a master building permit is valid for 3 consecutive years after its issuance or until the adoption of a new Florida Building Code, whichever is earlier. After a new Florida Building Code is adopted, the applicant may apply for a new master building permit, which, upon approval, is valid for 3 consecutive years.

(4)(a) An applicant may use a private provider pursuant to s. 553.791 to expedite the application process for building permits after a preliminary plat is approved under this section.

(b) A governing body shall establish a registry of at least three qualified contractors whom the governing body may use to supplement staff resources in ways determined by the governing body for processing and expediting the review of an application for a preliminary plat or any plans related to such application. A qualified contractor on the registry who is hired pursuant to this section to review an application, or any part thereof, for a preliminary

plat, or any part thereof, may not have a conflict of interest with the applicant. For purposes of this paragraph, the term “conflict of interest” has the same meaning as in s. 112.312.

(5) A governing body may work with appropriate local government agencies to issue an address and a temporary parcel identification number for lot lines and lot sizes based on the metes and bounds of the plat contained in the application.

(6) The governing body must issue the number or percentage of building permits requested by an applicant in accordance with the Florida Building Code and this section, provided the residential buildings or structures are unoccupied and all of the following conditions are met:

(a) The governing body has approved a preliminary plat for each residential subdivision or planned community.

(b) The applicant provides proof to the governing body that the applicant has provided a copy of the approved preliminary plat, along with the approved plans, to the relevant electric, gas, water, and wastewater utilities.

(c) The applicant holds a valid performance bond for up to 130 percent of the necessary improvements, as defined in s. 177.031(9), that have not been completed upon submission of the application under this section. For purposes of a master planned community as defined in s. 163.3202(5)(b), a valid performance bond is required on a phase-by-phase basis.

(7)(a) An applicant may contract to sell, but may not transfer ownership of, a residential structure or building located in the residential subdivision or planned community until the final plat is approved by the governing body and recorded in the public records by the clerk of the circuit court.

(b) An applicant may not obtain a temporary or final certificate of occupancy for each residential structure or building for which a building permit is issued until the final plat is approved by the governing body and recorded in the public records by the clerk of the circuit court.

(8) For purposes of this section, an applicant has a vested right in a preliminary plat that has been approved by a governing body if all of the following conditions are met:

(a) The applicant relies in good faith on the approved preliminary plat or any amendments thereto.

(b) The applicant incurs obligations and expenses, commences construction of the residential subdivision or planned community, and is continuing in good faith with the development of the property.

(9) Upon the establishment of an applicant’s vested rights in accordance with subsection (8), a governing body may not make substantive changes to the preliminary plat without the applicant’s written consent.

(10) An applicant must indemnify and hold harmless the local government, its governing body, its employees, and its agents from liability or damages resulting from the issuance of a building permit or the construction, reconstruction, or improvement or repair of a residential building or structure, including any associated utilities, located in the residential subdivision or planned community. Additionally, an applicant must indemnify and hold harmless the local government, its governing body, its employees, and its agents from liability or disputes resulting from the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for a residential building or structure that is constructed, reconstructed, improved, or repaired before the approval and recordation of the final plat of the qualified project. This indemnification includes, but is not limited to, any liability and damage resulting from wind, fire, flood, construction defects, bodily injury, and any actions, issues, or disputes arising out of a contract or other agreement between the developer and a utility operating in the residential subdivision or planned community. However, this indemnification does not extend to governmental actions that infringe on the applicant's vested rights.

Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor May 29, 2024.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 29, 2024.