

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 03/13/06		Item Number: <u>A-3</u>
AGENDA ITEM: Discussion of Establishing an Additional Policy for Significant Hillside Foundation Work.		
Contact Person/Dept.: Craig Johnson		Phone Number: (310) 253-5802
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☒ No ☐
Public Hearing: ☐	Action Item: ☒	Attachments: ☒
Public Notification: Master Notification List (03/09/06); Culver City News Public Notification (03/08/06). Mailing to all Culver Crest and Blair Hills residents (03/01/06).		
Department Approval: Susan Evans (03/01/06)	CAO Approval: Martin R. Cole for Jerry B. Fulwood (03/09/06)	
City Controller Approval: Marlee Chang (03/09/06)		

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council provide direction regarding the different implementation options available for significant hillside foundation work.

BACKGROUND:

On December 15, 2003 the City Council approved a resolution establishing an additional building permit fee to cover the costs of a new administrative policy which requires an additional geo-technical review for all construction involving new foundations on hillside properties. That policy was a result of staffs' work and involvement surrounding the situation with the property at 10639 Youngworth Road. The owner of 10639 Youngworth Road intended to rebuild and expand the existing house. He followed all of the requirements to receive permits for this project which included hiring a firm to perform a geotechnical engineering investigation report.

Although this individual followed all City procedures, several neighbors in the Culver Crest community expressed their concern over this project's approval. The residents believed that the size of this house was inappropriate for the geology of the hillside, which they believed was prone to slides. Additionally, the neighbors brought forth a study entitled "*Slope Stability and Geology of the Baldwin Hills, Los Angeles County, California*" which was dated 1982 and written by the California Department of Conservation Division of Mines and Geology. This study discussed the slope stability of the surrounding area.

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As a result of community concerns, staff recommended that the city hire a geotechnical consultant to review the geotechnical report that was written by Coastline Geotechnical Consultants for the 10639 Youngworth Road property.

The policy adopted on December 15, 2003, requires the following:

- Step 1: The Building Safety Division has a list of approved geotechnical consultants who provide an independent geotechnical review of all new construction involving new foundations for all hillside properties in Culver City.
- Step 2: If the independent geotechnical review concurs with the original geotechnical report, the permit application will be approved and the project may proceed.
- Step 3: If the independent geotechnical review conflicts with the original geotechnical report, the independent review will be forwarded to the engineer who wrote the original report. The engineer who prepared the original report may accept or discard suggested revisions.
- All re-reviews by the independent reviewer will be covered by the initial fee of \$2,500.

To date five reviews have fallen under this policy.

DISCUSSION:

On January 23, 2006, the City Council requested that staff bring back a discussion of additional measures that could be required for significant foundation work on hillsides. During this request it was also mentioned that one option might involve keeping a geo-technical engineer on staff. Staff does not believe that this expenditure is warranted based on the low demand. Also, this is not necessary due to the large number of qualified consultants at our disposal. By working with a variety of consulting firms that specialize in geo-tech reviews, staff is able to pull from a variety of resources that one staff person would not be able to provide.

The six options being presented tonight were developed in conjunction with the Culver Crest community. A meeting was held with the Culver Crest community in November 2005 to discuss other measures that could possibly be taken for hillside construction.

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These options would be in addition to the current City policy which requires an independent review of any geotechnical study required for a hillside property.

Option 1

- Step 1: Geotechnical Engineer reviews architectural and engineering drawings and must approve plans.
- Step 2: The plans are returned to applicant if geotechnical engineer disagrees with the design method.

Option 2

- Step 1: Geotechnical Engineer reviews architectural and engineering drawings and must approve plans.
- Step 2: The plans are returned to applicant if geotechnical engineer disagrees with the design method.
- Step 3: Geotechnical engineer inspects and must approve foundation forms prior to pouring concrete.

Option 3

- Step 1: Geotechnical Engineer reviews architectural and engineering drawings and must approve plans.
- Step 2: The plans are returned to applicant if geotechnical engineer disagrees with the design method.
- Step 3: Geotechnical engineer inspects and must approve foundation forms prior to pouring concrete.
- Step 4: A structural engineer must inspect and must approve foundation forms prior to pouring concrete.

Option 4

- Step 1: Geotechnical Engineer reviews architectural and engineering drawings and must approve plans.
- Step 2: The plans are returned to applicant if geotechnical engineer disagrees with the design method.
- Step 3: Geotechnical engineer inspects and must approve foundation forms prior to pouring concrete.
- Step 4: A structural engineer must inspect and must approve foundation forms prior to pouring concrete.
- Step 5: A structural engineer inspects and must approve rough framing prior to covering.
- Step 6: The Geotechnical Fee would be increased to \$4,500

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Option 5

- Step 1: Geotechnical Engineer reviews architectural and engineering drawings and must approve plans.
- Step 2: The plans are returned to applicant if geotechnical engineer disagrees with the design method.
- Step 3: Geotechnical engineer inspects and must approve foundation forms prior to pouring concrete.
- Step 4: A structural engineer must inspect and must approve foundation forms prior to pouring concrete.
- Step 5: A structural engineer inspects and must approve rough framing prior to covering.
- Step 6: Geotechnical engineer inspects and must approve final grading prior to landscaping.
- Step 7: The Geotechnical Fee would be increased to \$4,500

Option 6

- Step 1: Geotechnical Engineer reviews architectural and engineering drawings and must approve plans.
- Step 2: The plans are returned to applicant if geotechnical engineer disagrees with the design method.
- Step 3: Geotechnical engineer inspects and must approve foundation forms prior to pouring concrete.
- Step 4: A structural engineer must inspect and must approve foundation forms prior to pouring concrete.
- Step 5: A structural engineer inspects and must approve rough framing prior to covering.
- Step 6: Geotechnical engineer inspects and must approve final grading prior to landscaping.
- Step 7: Landscape architect inspects and must approve final landscaping prior to final City inspection.
- Step 8: The Geotechnical Fee would be increased to \$4,500

If options four, five, or six are recommended a public hearing would be held to consider the fee increase.

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FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The current fee for the independent geo-technical review is \$2500. If options four, five or six are recommended, the fee would need to be increased from \$2,500 to \$4,500 and a new Resolution would be brought back for the City Council's consideration.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution No. 2003R-108 that established an additional building permit fee to cover the costs of a new administrative policy which requires an additional geotechnical review for all construction involving new foundations for all hillside properties.
2. Graph depicting different options for hillside construction.

MOTION:

That the City Council:

Provide direction regarding the proposed options for significant hillside foundation work.