

# **New Business Welcome to the City of Riverview**

The City of Riverview would like to thank you for considering our city to locate your business. We are certain that you will find Riverview has everything you are looking for to operate a profitable and prosperous business. The following is a brief guide to the process of opening a business in Riverview. Your questions will be answered and contacts will be provided to smooth the process for you in your transition.

## **The Process**

1. Verify the Zoning requirements
2. Apply for your Business License
3. Receive approval from the City Inspectors
4. Obtain your Certificate of Occupancy

To make your move to Riverview as convenient as possible, we highly recommend that you begin by visiting the City Offices and meet with our Community Development Director. The process usually will go quickly and without complication. To help resolve issues, speaking with the Building Department first will help avoid surprises as the process proceeds. We are very interested in attracting new businesses to Riverview, and we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

## **Applying for your Business License**

Your first step is to obtain a Business License Application at the City Clerk's Office. This will get the process going and put you in contact with the appropriate departments. Before completing your application, you should know the square footage of the building or space you will lease, the number of employees you expect to have (and grow to) and the number of off-street parking spaces available to your location. Once you have obtained a Zoning Certificate from the Building Department you then submit your application to the City Clerk. There is a First Time Application Fee of \$35, and the License Fee depending on your type of business. We strongly recommend that you verify usage and zoning suitability of your site, then apply for your Business License before signing any leases or long-term agreements.

## **Verify Zoning Requirements**

Verify with the Community Development Department that the site you have chosen will properly accommodate your business as there are specific zoning districts for specific types of businesses. It is

recommended that you consider your parking requirements when choosing a location (i.e. on-street parking in front of building is for everyone's use). The Community Development Director will be pleased to answer questions to clarify this and other zoning issues. He approves the business license application and forwards it to the Building Official to continue the process. Variances from the City Code will need formal approval from the **Zoning Board of Appeals**.

## City Inspections

Total City Inspection Fees are \$550 with a \$25 Background Investigation Fee for each Owner/Manager. Once you have determined that your site will accommodate your business, the City Building Official and Fire Marshal (Inspection fees per type of business) (See Departmental Fee Schedule/Fire Department) will work with you to see that the building is up to the Building Maintenance Code. Changes to the interior of the building can be approved by the Building Official; however, if you plan to alter the physical 'footprint' of the building, you will need to get approval from the **Planning Commission**. If any changes need to be made, approval will be required by the Building Official and Fire Marshal, especially in instances where an older building needs to be modified with regard to **Barrier Free Requirements**. The City Building Official will inform you of what modifications will be required.

Your grounds as well as your building must also be '**Up to Code**.' Common issues businesses face regarding their property is compliance with the **Sign Ordinance**. Please obtain a copy of the sign ordinance or the sign summary when you apply for your business license. A Code Enforcement Officer will also visit the site and give his approval or inform you of any changes that need to be made.

## Receiving your Certificate of Occupancy

The city will approve your Certificate of Occupancy once the building and grounds have been approved through a final inspection.

The above is an overview of the process all businesses go through when getting started. Sometimes, however, a business doesn't quite 'fit' properly with the City Code. Depending upon the ordinance requirements and what the business wishes to do, there are four possible reviews and approvals that may be required before you are issued your Certificate of Occupancy. These are:

1. A variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals
2. A Site Plan Review
3. A Special Use approval
4. A Rezoning

The Community Development Director will let you know if any of these reviews will be necessary and answer any questions you might have. If you feel they might apply to you, the following gives additional details on how each of these reviews takes place.

## How to Untangle the Red Tape

### Rezoning

For businesses that wish to develop a property that is not zoned to accommodate their business, it will be necessary for the business owner to make their proposal to the Planning Commission. The Community Development Department will inform you if it is necessary.

The Process:

- 1) The Planning Commission holds a public hearing regarding the rezoning, where opinions of interested parties are heard and then makes a recommendation to the City Council for a final decision.  
(A rezoning affects the City's ordinance (the current zoning map). The City cannot only consider the business specifically being proposed; it also considers all of the other uses that could be permitted as 'of right' if the rezoning is adopted, the current development pattern, and the City's Master Plan.)
- 2) Discuss rezoning property with the Community Development Department who could assist you in locating an available properly zoned property.

### Site Plan Review (Planning Commission)

A business wishing to add onto the building, change the facade, or add parking must apply for a **Site Plan Review**. There is a fee of \$300 for façade changes and for all other improvements. Advance notice of 30 days is required. Again, we **strongly recommend** a preliminary meeting with the Community Development Director before beginning this process in order to determine what issues will be discussed. The emphasis of the Planning Commission will be to ensure that the requested changes will not adversely affect the surrounding commercial and residential areas. It is important to remember that the Planning Commission is considering final plans, and that all expected modifications must be included in the presented plans. As a result, it is prudent to discuss your plans with the Community Development Director and your neighbors before moving through this process. These preliminary efforts will considerably ease your final review.

### Special Use Approval

Certain uses are permitted as 'of right' within the City of Riverview. **Special Uses**, because of their nature, can not be administratively approved. To apply for a Special Use approval, there is a \$250 application

fee and 30 days advance notice is required. Again, we recommend a preliminary meeting with the Community Development Director before beginning the process to determine what issues will be discussed.

The Process:

- 1) The application will first come before the Planning Commission, who will then make a recommendation to the City Council.
- 2) The Planning Commission is to ensure that the neighborhood will not be adversely affected by the proposed use.
- 3) The Planning Commission also holds a public hearing where opinions of all interested parties are heard. This is the opportunity for the business owner(s) discuss their plans.
- 4) A recommendation is then forwarded to the City Council who has the final say on the matter. (It is encouraged that you discuss your plans with the Community Development Director and your neighbors before moving through this process.)

## Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

A business wishing to appeal a decision or zoning law can apply to the ZBA for a Variance. There is a \$250 fee for this application and requires a minimum of 30 days advance notice to allow for required legal notices. The ZBA will consider the request with emphasis on the business demonstrating a **Practical Difficulty or Undue Hardship**. The hearing is held in an open forum with any interested party having an opportunity to voice his opinion. The business owner, however, is usually the focal point, this being his opportunity to discuss his plans. The Community Development Director presents a report of his findings to the ZBA, and as such, we recommend that you thoroughly discuss your plans with the Community Development Director before the hearing.

## Contacts

Community Development Director Dave Scurto	734-281-4204
Building Official	734-281-4242
Community Development Administrator Jen Dufore	734-281-4242
Code Enforcement Officer	734-281-4249
Code Enforcement Officer	734-281-4244
Building & Engineering/Planning Commission /Zoning Board of Appeals	734-281-4242
City Clerk Cindy Hutchison	734-281-4239
City Clerk Licensing Ann Meldrum	734-281-4240
Deputy Fire Chief Rodney Branham	734-281-4266

Thank you for your interest in operating your business Riverview

## New Business Applicant

Please submit a LETTER with your New Business Application to the Building and Engineering Department to receive Zoning Certificate approval describing, in as much detail as possible, the exact nature of your business and the following:

- Type of business and services provided
- Equipment on site
- Storage and inventory arrangements
- Hours of operation
- A site plan in the form of a drawing or sketch of the interior showing each room and all exits
- A drawing or sketch of the exterior including number of parking spaces; indicate handicapped parking designation.
- Zoning Certificate from the Building Department
- A first time application fee (\$35.00) and the license fee (per type of business) will be required upon submission to the Clerk's Office.

### **REMEMBER TO INCLUDE AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE.**

The City of Riverview requires the following safety features:

1. CENTRALLY MONITORED SMOKE/HEAT RISE ALARM if your business is not opened 24 hours per day.
2. Approved fire extinguisher(s) must be in clear view and easily accessible; extinguishers must be tagged annually. Check extinguisher expiration date.
3. Emergency lighting hardwired with backup battery
4. Exit signs must be over all doors, hardwired with backup battery
5. Doors must have push-bar/crash bar handles or lever handles. No twisting knobs

\*Note: **Signage requires a permit from Riverview's Building Department**

Once Zoning approval is granted by the Community Development Department the application is submitted, the processing is as follows (**Building Department Fees will apply:**

- All necessary building, electrical, mechanical and plumbing permits approval by the Building and Engineering Department.
- Fire Code approval by the Fire Department.
- Background Approval.
- Business CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY granted by the Building Department.

**NOTE: Occupation/construction of a building without proper permits and/or the operation of a business prior to receiving all approvals and licensing by these departments may result in the issuance of a written citation to the business owner and/or occupant.**



## COMMON BUSINESS VIOLATIONS

Addresses must be clearly visible from the street, 5" to 6" numbers, contrasting color to the building.

Exit lights must be installed over all exit doors, hard wired with battery back up. Must be fully operational during all business hours. No burned out light bulbs.

Emergency lighting must be hard wired, with battery back up. Must be fully operational during all business hours.

Electrical service panels and heat producing appliances must have 36" clearance to storage of any kind.

All electrical junction boxes must have proper covers in place.

Extension cords are not to be used as permanent wiring; sufficient duplex outlets must be provided for all electrical appliances.

General housekeeping must be neat and orderly, storage and rubbish must be removed from aisle way and exit access ways.

Fire extinguishers must be mounted in clear view and easily accessible. Must be serviced and tagged annually.

Dumpsters must be a minimum of 15 feet from the building.

Compressed gas cylinders must be chained in place to prevent tipping.

Penetrations in walls and ceiling must be repaired. No missing ceiling tiles.

Commercial kitchen appliances plus hood and duct system must be cleaned regularly and maintained free of grease accumulation.

Commercial kitchen suppression systems must be serviced semi-annually.