

Valdosta News

Local Governments Partner with Chamber S.O.R.T. Committee

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Valdosta-Lowndes County, Ga. – Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta are pleased to have participated in a cooperative effort between local governments and the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce’s Special Ombudsman Response Team or SORT. The SORT committee, made up of chamber members Sue Cox (Chairperson), Dean Blevins, Allan Dear, Richard Hill, Bill Slaughter, Chuck Smith and Al Turner, is working in conjunction with the city and county to enhance the pro-business environment in Valdosta-Lowndes County by facilitating discussion between businesses and local governments to identify obstacles in the business development process and develop beneficial resolutions.

Creation of the committee was suggested by local leaders in an effort to provide the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County with constructive feedback addressing the city’s Land Development Regulation (LDR) ordinance and Lowndes County’s Unified Land Development Code (ULDC). Both the LDR and ULDC were initially created via a “stake holder” process in an effort to create a balance between statutory requirements and the wishes of the development community. Since the adoption of these codes, which consolidated and replaced several outdated codes, the economic atmosphere under which development was taking place has evolved and this had an impact on the current effectiveness of local ordinances and regulations.

Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta value the importance of maintaining a close relationship with the business community to ensure ordinances continue to meet the ongoing needs of all citizens. This being the case, the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce is to be commended for their willingness to help facilitate strong business relationships that will keep our city and county growing for years to come. The Chamber and the SORT committee will continue to assist and provide feedback and guidance to the governments and monitor the effectiveness of changes already implemented. The groups plan to meet several times yearly to continue the open dialogue and communication. All parties agree that measurable progress and improvements have been made, and recognize that communication is helpful to keep businesses informed.

In November, local government leaders, staff and members of the SORT committee met to discuss recommendations for updates to the LDR and ULDC, as well as to learn of many changes already made and others in the process of being made. The group will continue to meet periodically to discuss suggested amendments to both ordinances and/or additional opportunities to enhance the development process in Valdosta and Lowndes County. To view a copy of the ULDC, citizens may visit www.lowndescounty.com; the LDR may also be found online at www.valdostacity.com.

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