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Provisions may speed small-project permits

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Smaller projects and their builders might have received a leg up on the hoops they have to jump through to build in the Cape Coral Community Redevelopment Area.

The message from the redevelopment agency's board of directors is that while it wants to attract large development to the downtown area, it isn't neglecting smaller ones.

After the redevelopment area's building codes

hope the permitting process will speed up.

The commission tacked on provisions to the codes for a committee to review and possibly change the codes annually.

Another provision stated projects with more than 20 units or floor area exceeding that allowed for the size of the lot go through another, longer process to get building permits.

Builders hope that leaves them with a streamlined route to permits for their smaller projects.

"We built to the vision of what is planned for the CRA when we built the two-story

condo my office is in," said Powell Construction Co.'s vice president Scott Hertz. "Now we'll have the codes to go by. They won't be perfect. There's a committee to change them when necessary, but they will get us started."

The Grape Escape wine shop sits in the bottom floor of Hertz's office building at Club Square off Southeast 47th Terrace. It was the first building in the redevelopment area to conform to rules such as zero lot lines, which became part of the codes.

Zero lot lines mean the building is not set back but is on the lot line. It is

Other codes specify that buildings also have a color code to adhere to

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and landscaping to break up and beautify the area for pedestrian traffic. Planners would like to turn the area into a place where people live, work, play and dine.

Byrd's Terraces at Rosa Vista project at Southeast 47th Terrace by Southeast Fifth Place had been scheduled to break ground in August. It remains a vacant lot.

The lot owners, Alan and Monika Tannenbaum, plan to build a \$4 million European-style office, retail and restaurant project.

"The city has done all it could to speed up the permitting process, but we got caught in a time slot with hurricane Charley," said the Tannenbaum's builder, Richard Byrd, president of Gulf Coast Consulting Group. "We've been 15 months on the project, more than a year in permitting."

Cape Coral City Council scheduled the codes for introduction at its Oct. 11 meeting.

If the council adopts them, the codes would be a great improvement, said the Cape's redevelopment area executive director, Suzanne Kuehn.

"All a developer has to do is show the plans that follow what the codes specify," Kuehn said. "Once we know they are doing what the code book says, they can pull permits."

Permitting for the larger projects could take longer because the size and complexity of the undertakings make more of an impact on the redevelopment area and the city than a smaller building.

12-story-high condominiums, a hotel, offices, restaurants and a movie theater.

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