



Zoning

FY2023 Citizen Centric Report

About Us

The Commonwealth Zoning Board is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors appointed by the Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and subject to the confirmation of the Saipan & Northern Islands Legislative Delegation (SNILD). The Zoning Office is staffed in 3 sections, the Administration, Permitting, and Enforcement. The Board, through its Zoning Office, is responsible with the task of regulating land uses and developments on the islands of Saipan and Managaha.

Balance & Sustainability

The Commonwealth Zoning Board was established by CNMI Public Law 6-32 to administer a land use and zoning system that protects the interests of landowners and the general public as a whole. Its primary role is to administer a system of zoning that allows for a mixture of uses by measuring the compatibility of proximate uses against quantifiable performance standards. These duties are done to safeguard the health, safety, and general welfare of residents and visitors of the CNMI while respecting and preserving the natural and historical resources of the islands.

Our Mission

To safeguard the health, safety, and general welfare of the residents and visitors of the CNMI by administering an effective zoning system that allows for harmonious business enterprise, compatibility with proximate uses, and a land use system that protects the interests of both present and future residents.

THE BOARD

Henry S. Hofschneider
CHAIRMAN

Michael N. Evangelista
VICE-CHAIRMAN

Pedro I. Itibus
SECRETARY

Michael S. Demapan
MEMBER

Shayne Villanueva
MEMBER

Cecilia Taitano
MEMBER

THE STAFF

Yubert M. Alepuyo
ACTING ZONING ADMINISTRATOR/
CHIEF ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

Walter Zachrias,
ENFORCEMENT OFFICER II

Doris DLGuerrero
ENFORCEMENT OFFICER I

Naomi T. Santos
ADMIN OFFICER

Lillia Rein T. Somorang
ADMIN ASST.

Julia A. Kapileo
PERMIT OFFICER I

James B. Sasamoto
PERMIT OFFICER I

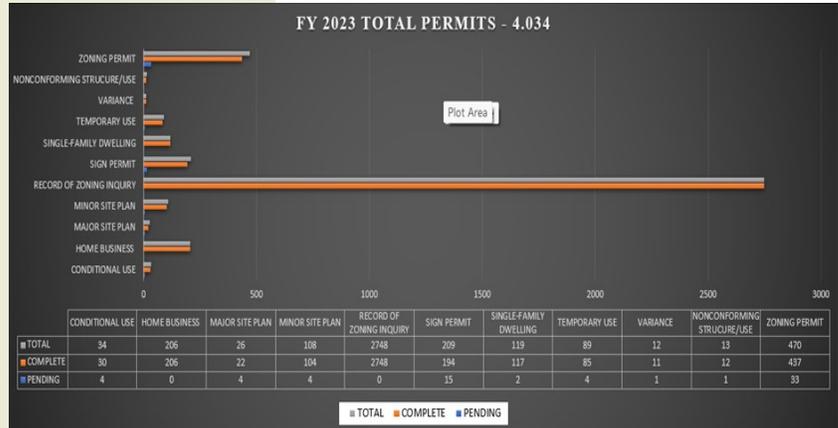
Keisha Blaise
LEGAL COUNSEL

Overview

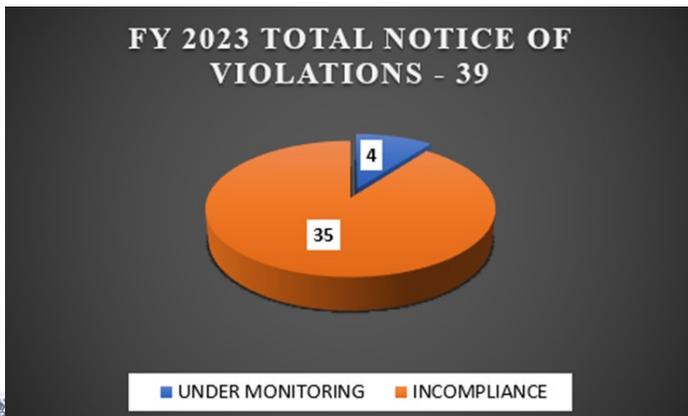
Permitting

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Zoning office processed a total of **4,034** zoning permits and clearances. Of this total, the highest number of applications processed were zoning clearances at 2,748, followed by zoning permits to operate businesses in existing structures at 470, home business permits at 206, sign permits at 209, and single family dwelling permits at 119. Conditional Use applications processed totaled 34, while major and minor site plan permits totaled 134.

From the total 4,034 permits processed, 98% were completed by the end of the fiscal year, while the other 2% remained pending awaiting submittal of further requirements.



Enforcement



The zoning office conducted a total of **142** inspections for compliance with Zoning requirements. These inspections included 44 on single family homes, 39 on public nuisances, 20 on zoning permits, and 18 on Conditional Use permits. From the total inspections, **39** notices of violations were issued, out of which 35 were found in compliance, while 4 were ongoing and being monitored under enforcement.



Revenues & Expenses

The Zoning Board and Office received the following fundings for Operations and Personnel during FY23:

- **General Fund (Public Law 23- 04)**

The amount of **\$192,928.00** was used to cover the salaries of six Personnel at \$191,018.00, with Utilities and Public Auditor fees at \$1,910.00

- **American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA)**

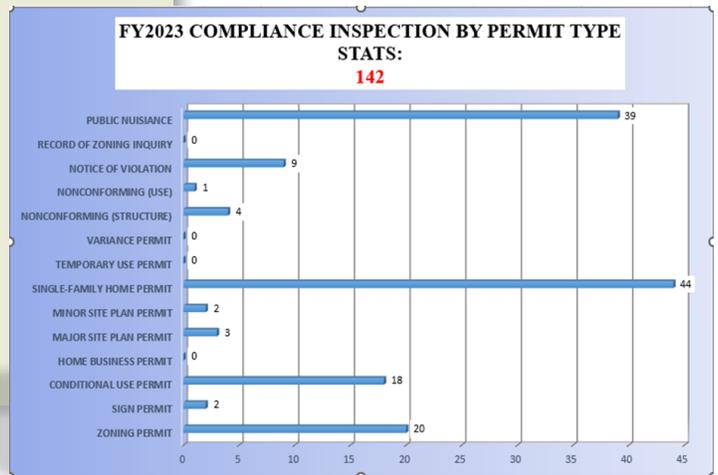
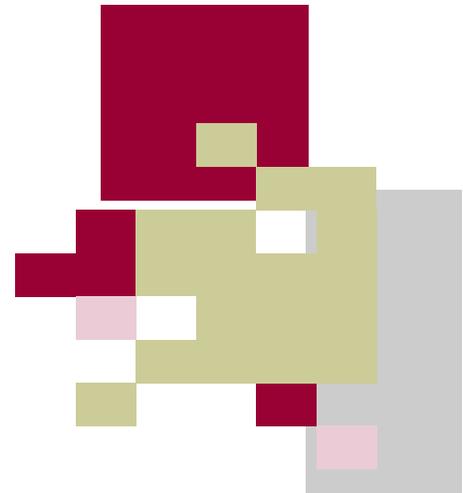
While this fund was disbursed during FY22, its available balance carried forth through the first two quarters of FY 2023 was spent mostly to assist Personnel cost and purchases of office equipment. The carried-over amount totaled **\$178,039.00**.

- **U.S. Department of the Interior, Technological Enhancing of Land Use/ Bldg., Mgmt, Project**

This grant assisted the Office with **\$153,605.00**, from which \$106,113.00 was allocated toward Personnel and \$47,492.00 for the purchase of GIS licenses, office equipment, and utilities.

- **Saipan & Northern Islands Legislative Delegation (SNILD)**

The total amount of **\$75,000** was utilized to assist with Personnel expense.



Challenges



The Fiscal Year experienced great challenges, especially during its 2nd quarter, which led to the implementation of government-wide cost cutting measures, including budget reductions and austerity to reduce government work hours. With the discontinuance of the ARPA grant, the office released the services of 3 staff who were hired and funded through this grant.

The office's relocation to a new location in Chalan Laulau fulfilled its aim to secure sufficient work spaces for office operations and enforcement, as well as ample parking spaces for visitors. However, with measures actively in place to minimize costs, the office had begun making plans to relocate to Capitol Hill to occupy government-owned buildings for its operations to fit staff capacity, storage, and Board conference room.

The office also experienced the need for additional enforcement vehicles and continued to search for funding sources. Three vehicles are currently operable, with only two serving enforcement while one is used for admin services. The office's aim to activate the full implementation of the Nuisance Abatement and Blighted Properties Maintenance Act next fiscal year adds pressure to prioritize searching for funding to secure enforcement vehicles.

With cost cutting and austerity measures in place, the office has continued working within its means to cover personnel and urgent operational expenses. The office anticipates the need to hire additional enforcement staff to support upcoming projects, and therefore will actively search for funding opportunities to assist with hiring.



Economic Outlook



The following are projects which the Zoning Board and Office aim to accomplish within the next fiscal year.

- To continue streamlining and improving the application processes for home businesses, single family dwellings, site plans, conditional uses, and other requirements for permitting.
- To conduct Zoning campaigns, village meetings, and presentations to connect with landowners, businesses, contractors, and developers to further promote public awareness and understanding of the Saipan Zoning Law and discuss concerns for improvements.
- To fully implement the Nuisance Abatement and Blighted Property Maintenance Act of 2018, with the support of partner government agencies. The Board and office will be conducting a series of public outreach meetings within the villages to provide information and awareness to the communities about the Act and its actual implementation process.