



MEMORANDUM

Town of Nags Head

Planning & Development Department

To: Board of Commissioners
Planning Board

From: Michael Zehner, Director of Planning & Development

Date: July 24, 2020

Subject: Planning and Development Director's Report

This memo provides an overview of selected Planning and Development Department activities, projects, and initiatives. If requested, Staff will be prepared to discuss any of this information in detail at the Board of Commissioners meeting on August 5, 2020; however, there are several items for which feedback from the Commissioners would be requested, as follows: Skate Park - Potential Grant Application, Residential Stormwater Regulations, and RFQ for Update of Decentralized Wastewater Management Plan.

Monthly Activity Report

Attached for the Board's review is the *Planning and Development Monthly Report for June 2020*. In addition to permitting, inspections, code enforcement, and Todd D. Krafft Septic Health Initiative activities, Staff was involved in the following meetings or activities of note during the month:

- Tuesday, June 9 - Board of Commissioners Budget Workshop
- Wednesday, June 10 - Arts & Culture Committee Meeting
- Tuesday, June 16 - Planning Board Meeting

Impact of Coronavirus on Permitting

As previously reported, a total of 67 building permits (non-trade) were applied for in both March 2020 and March 2019. In April, 48 building permits were applied for in both 2020 and 2019. In May, 57 building permits were applied for in 2020, while 48 were applied for in 2019. Finally, in June, 48 permits were applied for in 2020, while 39 were applied for in 2019. Since March 16 through July 23, 215 permits were applied for in 2020 compared to 194 in 2019.

With regard to trade permits, a total of 469 were issued in March through June of 2019, and a total of 300 were issued during the same period in 2020.

We will continue to monitor and report any impacts to permitting.

Report on Permitting - 3rd & 4th Quarters FY19-20

Please find attached an updated report to include the 3rd and 4th Quarters of FY19-20 (January 2020 - March 2020 and April 2020 - June 2020, respectively).

Skate Park - Potential Grant Application

As previously noted, Staff is considering applying for the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grant. This application would be seeking funds to design and develop plans for a future renovation of the Skate Park located at the YMCA. Staff estimates that this work would total \$30,000, and the grant requires a 50% local match, so the Town's contribution would be at least \$15,000. As the Board is aware, no funds are currently budgeted for this project; therefore, Staff would like the Board's feedback as to whether Staff should pursue this grant, recognizing that, if successful, the Board would need to decide at a later date whether these funds could be made available or that the grant award should be declined. The grant requires a partnership with a non-profit cultural arts or design organization, and Staff has been coordinating with the Dare County Arts Council

Residential Stormwater Regulations

At the July 1 meeting of the Board of Commissioners, Staff presented recommendations from the Planning Board pertaining to the Town's residential stormwater regulations, a review initiated at the request of the Board of Commissioners. It was the consensus of the Commissioners that the recommendations and regulations be discussed at a future workshop. At the Planning Board meeting on July 21, the Planning Board indicated their interest in participating in such a workshop with the Commissioners. It is also important to note that the Commissioners had suggested that a review of the regulations by a third-party consultant may be beneficial. Staff would suggest feedback from the Board on the timeline of a potential workshop, whether they would like to include the Planning Board, and whether this workshop should coincide with any review by a consultant, if include a consultant in the workshop.

RFQ for Update of Decentralized Wastewater Management Plan

Staff is working to prepare an RFQ based upon the scope that was presented at the July 1, 2020 Board of Commissioners meeting, expected to be released by mid-August. In terms of evaluating responses, and selecting the eventual consultant, Staff would request the Commissioners feedback as to whether they, along with certain Staff, would like to evaluate the responses, interview consultants if determined ideal, and select the consultant.

Planning Board - Pending Applications and Discussions

The July 21, 2020 meeting of the Planning Board was held in person, with one member participating remotely via the Zoom platform. Applicants also choose to participate via Zoom. This was the first meeting held in person since the Board's meeting held on February 18, 2020. The agenda included a further housekeeping text amendment to the UDO, reconsideration of a withdrawn text amendment to allow the Real Estate Rental Management Facility use in the C-2 zoning district, a text amendment to allow Furniture Stores as an allowable use as part of Commercial Mixed Use uses, and continued consideration of legacy establishments/structures.

The Planning Board's next meeting is scheduled for August 18, 2020. At this time, the agenda is expected to include consideration of a text amendment to address

nonconforming hotels and preexisting uses in conjunction with fishing piers, and conditional use permit applications for the Dream Center property contingent upon the text amendments for Real Estate Rental Management Facilities and Furniture Stores.

Additional Updates

- **2020 Census** - As previously indicated, the number/percentage of vacant vacation/rental homes in Town would skew the response rate recognized by the Census, as the rate is not adjusted at this time to account for those homes. Dare County has begun releasing the information on the rate depicting more accurate response rates based upon the number of occupied homes in the various communities. Based upon this methodology, the Town's response rate as of July 20, 2020 has been determined to be 85.46%, up from 83.91% on June 23.

On July 24, 2020, the Mayor and Director participated in a call with Derek Dorazio, Partner Specialist for North Carolina with the U.S. Census Bureau. Mr. Dorazio discussed the response rate for the Town and recommended actions that could be taken to increase the response rate. Staff provided Mr. Dorazio with information that may assist in making upcoming door-to-door efforts more efficient.

- **Town Workforce Housing Study & Plan - Phase 1 Report** presented to the Board of Commissioners at the February 5, 2020 meeting. Further action on this project is on hold pending direction from the Board of Commissioners; however, it is important to note that funds associated with this project were liquidated due to budgetary constraints associated with the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- **Hazard Mitigation Plan Update** - With the Board of Commissioners adoption of the updated Plan on July 1, 2020, this project is considered complete.
- **Skate Park Renovation - Phase 1** - Staff is working to finalize a survey to determine community preferences for any future renovation of the Skate Park. Staff has also discussed the project with the Arts & Culture Committee, who are supportive of incorporating public art within the Park; this focus is the basis for the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grant previously referenced.
- **CAMA Land Use Plan Update** - Staff has prepared and submitted responses and proposed draft revisions responding to comments issued by DCM staff. On July 15, 2020, Staff received further comments pertaining to the completeness of the Plan based upon CAMA requirements. As of the date of this memo, Staff is preparing revisions responding to these comments. A determination of Plan completeness is required before further review is initiated.
- **UDO Reference Manual & Permitting Workflow** - Staff continues to develop Reference Manual materials, including identifying and refining workflows, to be brought to the Board of Commissioners for approval at a later date.
- **Art Masts** - As previously noted, the Art Mast project, coordinated with the Arts & Culture Committee, has resulted in four completed art panels. The Arts & Culture

Committee continues to discuss the locations for the new Art Masts, and is considering installations beginning at Bonnet Street and ending in the Gallery Row District. Staff is working with a sign company to determine the best way to install the masts.

- **Decentralized Wastewater Master Plan** - As noted above, Staff is working to prepare an RFQ, to be released by mid-March.
- **Islington Street Beach Access** - Subject to DCM/CAMA and CIP funds to improve the access, Staff will be working to prepare plans for permitting. Staff anticipates the site plan to be reviewed initially at the September Planning Board meeting.
- **Jacob Street Beach Access** - With the exception of the installation of a bike rack and completed of an as-built plan, construction of this project has been completed and Staff is working with DCM staff to close out the grant.
- **Legacy Establishments/Structures** - Working with the Planning Board, the focus of this effort has been narrowed to pertain to nonconforming hotels, as well as one fishing pier property that includes residential units, also a nonconforming condition. Staff anticipates bringing a text amendment forward at the August Planning Board meeting.
- **Dowdy Park Farmer's Market** - The Market is scheduled to run every Thursday in the months of July and August with a wide range of vendors including fresh produce, local honey, seafood, wood carving, ceramics, pottery and other handmade crafts. Thus far, 3 of the 4 scheduled markets have been held, with the Market schedule for July 9 being cancelled based upon the weather forecast. Staff has been enforcing masking and other protocols to ensure the public's health and safety.
- **Permitting/Online Permitting** - Staff had previously contacted representatives of the Outer Banks Home Builders Association to coordinate a schedule for a workshop/forum for the building community. However, given current circumstances, this effort has been placed on hold. Staff is considering developing a series of videos in the interim.

Staff has begun an email distribution to contractors registered with the Town to provide updates on changes to permitting and inspection procedures associated with the Coronavirus Pandemic and response. Similar updates in the future are expected to be made on a more regular schedule and Staff will likely transition to using the News Flash feature on the Town's website.

As previously reported, as of May 8, 2020, online permitting has been activated for all residential and commercial building and trade permit types, with the exception of permits for moving of residential or commercial structures; moving permits are expected to be added now that updated fees have been approved. Staff will continue to work to make improvements to the platform, publicize the

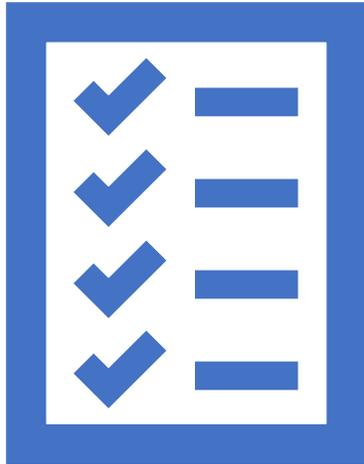
availability of the resource, and refine documents providing guidance to the Town's customers.

- **Grants and Assistance**

- Staff had submitted a request under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (Tropical Storm Michael) to update the Town's Emergency Operations Plan. Staff learned that funding under that event was no longer being considered, but that the request was being considered under funding decisions related to Hurricane Dorian,
- Staff submitted a Letter of Interest ("LOI") under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program related to Hurricane Dorian for the acquisition of property, and assisted Fire Chief Wells in the submission of an LOI for replacement of a generator; we have been notified that the generator request has been selected for further consideration, and have also learned that the request for funds for property acquisition also continues to be considered.
- An LOI has been submitted for a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - National Coastal Resilience Fund grant to develop an Estuarine Shoreline Management Plan; the final application will be submitted shortly. Additionally, a preapplication was submitted for the 2020 North Carolina Attorney General Environmental Enhancement Grant for the same project, for which the Town was approved to submit a full application, which was submitted on May 28, 2020.
- As noted, Staff is preparing an application for the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grant seeking funds to prepare designs for the renovation of the Town's Skate Park.
- Staff had previously reported on the CASSI Autonomous Shuttle Pilot program. Due to NCDOT budget constraints, Staff was notified that the program would require the Town to cover a lease payment of \$46,000 per month for the shuttle. Based upon this information, Staff decided not to submit for the program at this time. Staff did request to be notified if future opportunities become available.

Upcoming Meetings and Other Dates

- Thursday, July 30 - Farmers' Market
- Monday, August 3 - P&D Staff Meeting
- Wednesday, August 5 - Board of Commissioners Meeting
- Thursday, August 6 - Farmers' Market
- Thursday, August 6 - Annual Emergency Operations Exercise
- Tuesday, August 18 - Planning Board Meeting



Report on Planning and Development Department Permitting Processes

FY19-20 - 3rd Quarter (Jan '20 - March '20)

FY19-20 - 4th Quarter (April '20 – June '20)

August 5, 2020

Board of Commissioners Meeting

Report on Planning and Development Department Permitting Processes

FY19-20, 3rd & 4th Quarters

- Completed/Instituted – Since January 2019
 - Bi-weekly Permit Tracking benchmarks reduced
 - Focus on internal and external communication improvements
 - Monthly Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement Team Meeting
 - Fees increased consistent with adjacent communities and to offset cost of services
 - Coordination of zoning, E&S, and stormwater pre- and post-construction inspections
 - Require final zoning and stormwater inspections prior to final building inspections
 - Code Enforcement Officer received probationary building inspection certificate
 - Additional Munis Training for Staff - Nov. 7 & 8, 2019; addressed general use, inspection scheduling, report and form generation, and updating property owner information
 - Customer kiosk with computer installed in lobby
 - Publicly-accessible permits & inspections search portal added to Citizen Self Service: <https://selfservice.nagsheadnc.gov/MSS/citizens/PermitsInspections/Default.aspx>
 - Permitting staff met with Bill News, Chief Building Code Official for Currituck County, to review use of Munis, and specially online permitting modules.

Report on Planning and Development Department Permitting Processes

FY19-20, 3rd & 4th Quarters

- Completed/Instituted – New items since January 2020
 - Rollout Citizen Self Service for online trade permits
 - Rollout Citizen Self Service for all building permits
 - Developed and implemented remote permitting protocols in response to the Pandemic
 - Developed and implemented remote inspections protocols.
 - Streamlined fees for demolitions and moving permits

Report on Planning and Development Department Permitting Processes

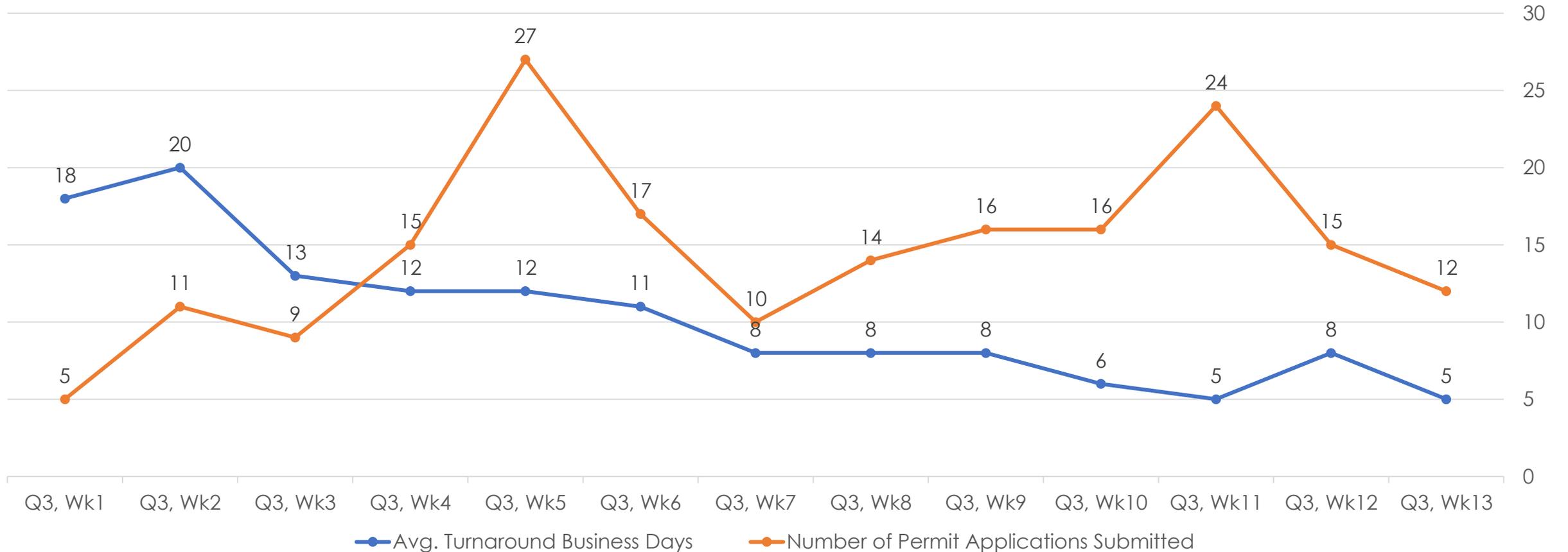
FY19-20, 3rd & 4th Quarters

- Next Steps/Moving Forward
 - Document and improve permitting workflows
 - Create separate review processes for less complicated permits/work
 - Prepare Development Manual as part of UDO adoption
 - Plan workshops or develop videos for Home Builders, Real Estate Association, residents, etc.
 - Continue to refine and improve online permitting; resolve Munis platform issues
 - Facilitate and encourage use of customer kiosk
 - Transition Blue Prince records to Munis
 - Develop preferences and goals for records management and digitization
 - Update Munis platform and permits for new F.I.R.M. and CRS

Report on Planning and Development Department Permitting Processes

FY19-20, 3rd & 4th Quarters

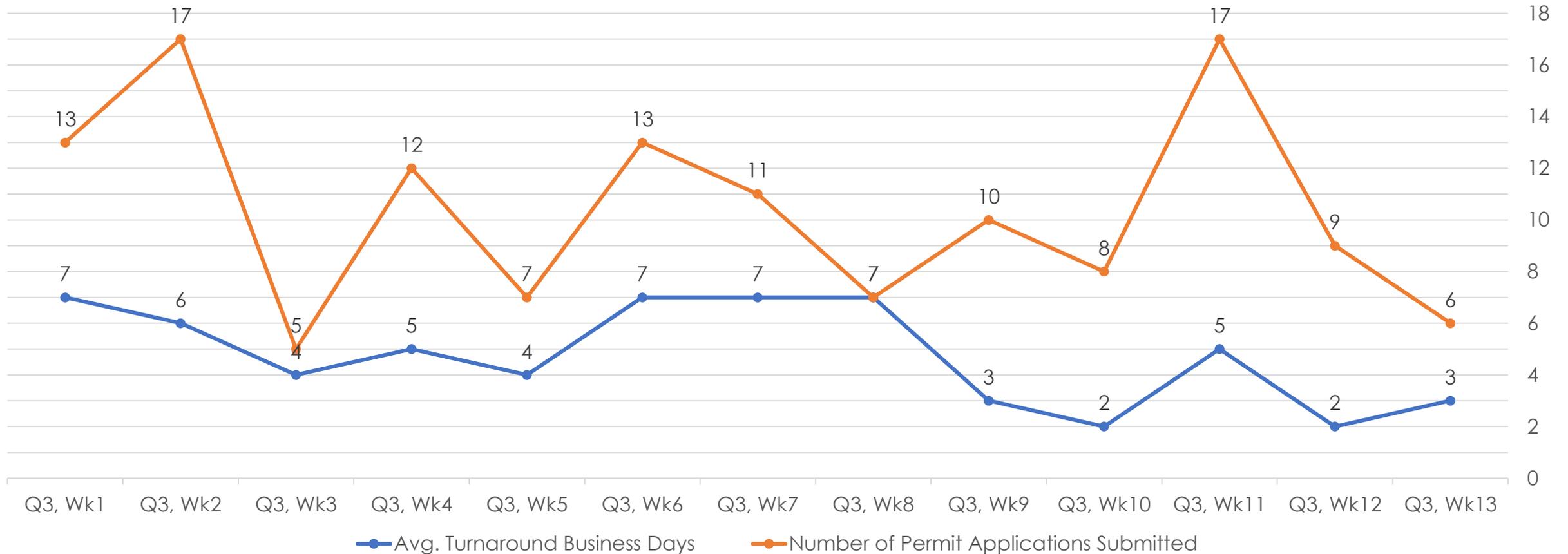
FY18-19, 3rd Quarter - Permits Applied & Turnaround
191 Permit Applications Submitted; 8.89 Days Avg. Turnaround



Report on Planning and Development Department Permitting Processes

FY19-20, 3rd & 4th Quarters

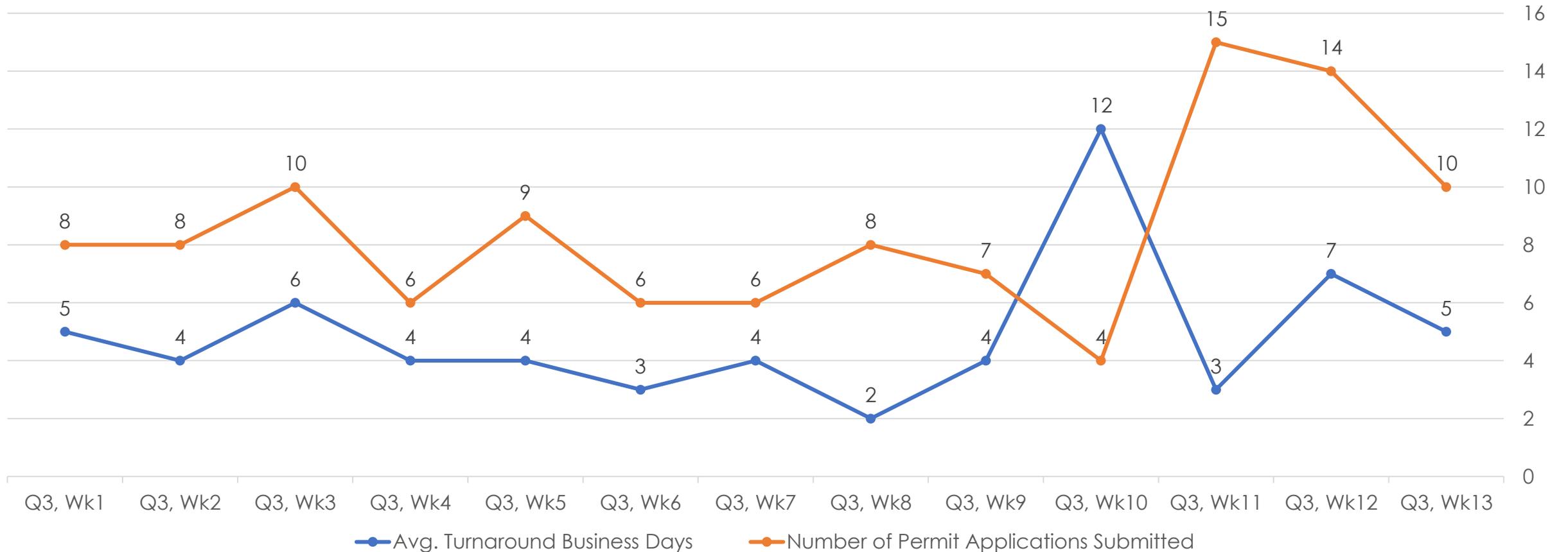
FY18-19, 4th Quarter - Permits Applied & Turnaround
136 Permit Applications Submitted; 5.11 Days Avg. Turnaround



Report on Planning and Development Department Permitting Processes

FY19-20, 3rd & 4th Quarters

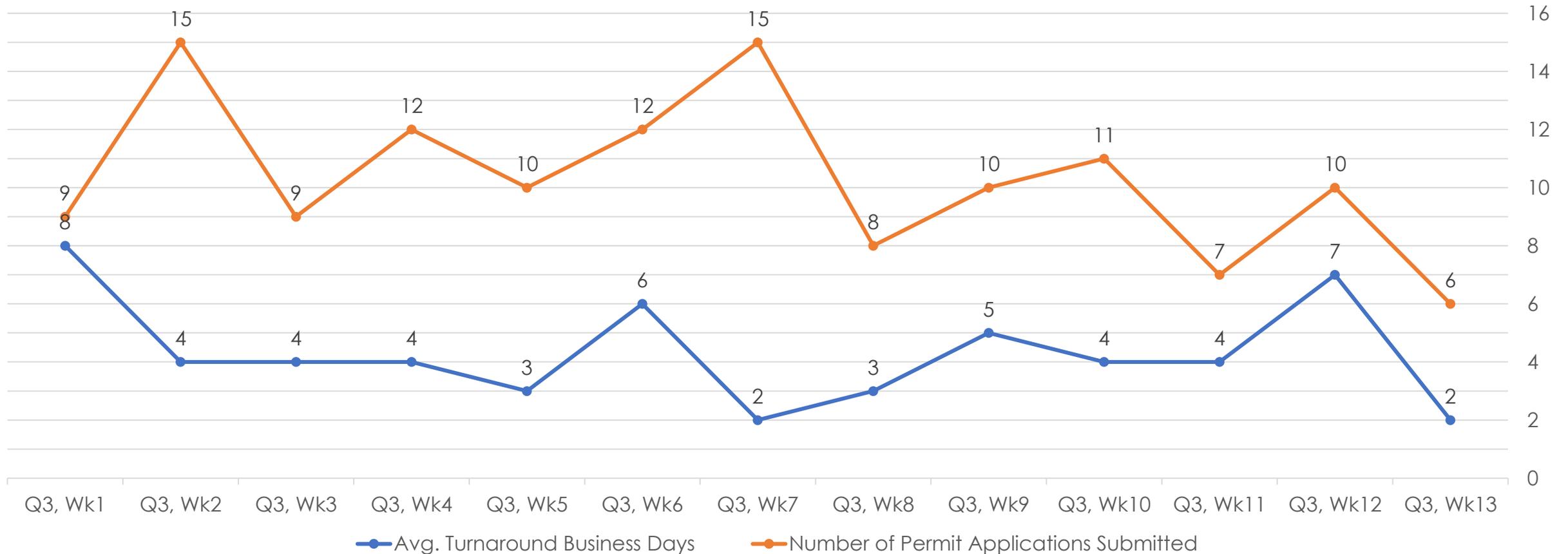
FY19-20, 1st Quarter - Permits Applied & Turnaround
111 Permit Applications Submitted; 4.72 Days Avg. Turnaround



Report on Planning and Development Department Permitting Processes

FY19-20, 3rd & 4th Quarters

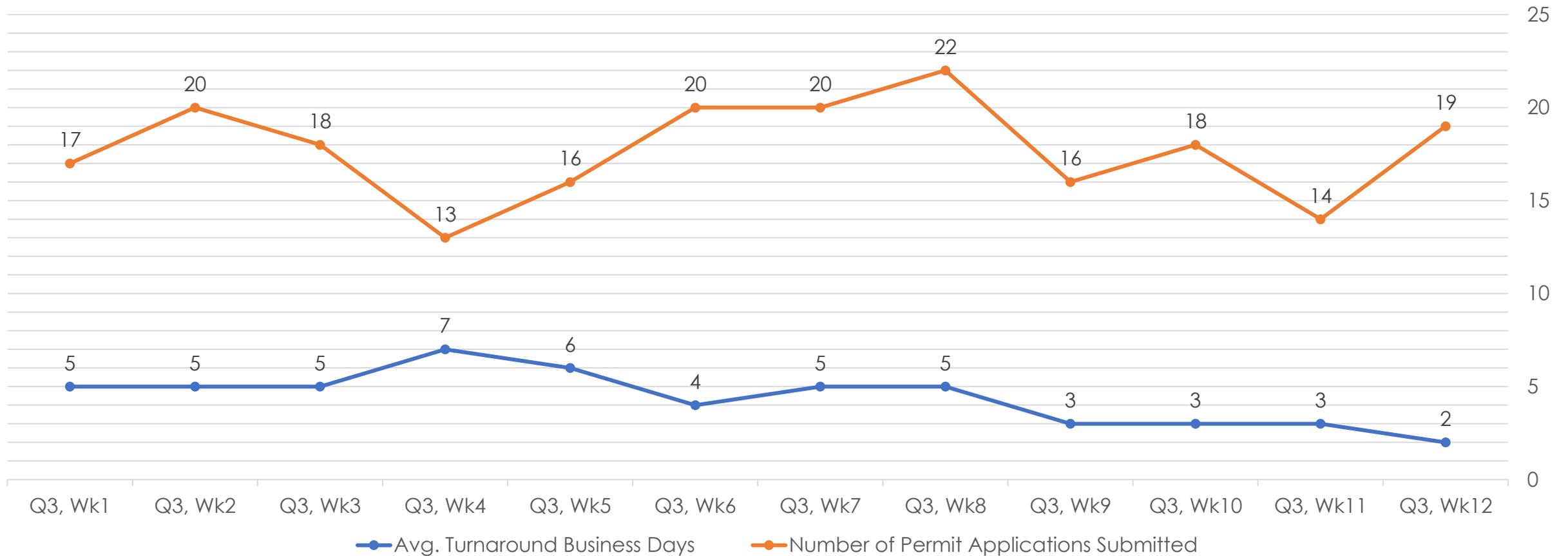
FY19-20, 2nd Quarter - Permits Applied & Turnaround
134 Permit Applications Submitted; 4.23 Days Avg. Turnaround



Report on Planning and Development Department Permitting Processes

FY19-20, 3rd & 4th Quarters

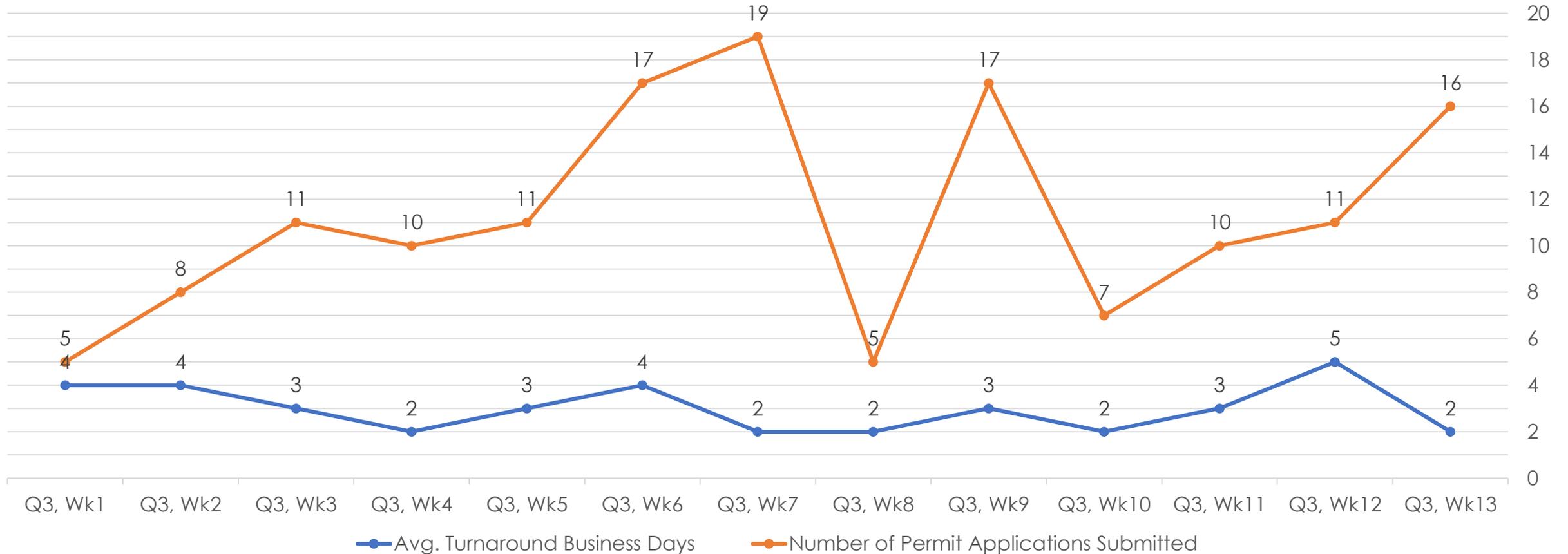
FY19-20, 3rd Quarter - Permits Applied & Turnaround
213 Permit Applications Submitted; 4.19 Days Avg. Turnaround



Report on Planning and Development Department Permitting Processes

FY19-20, 3rd & 4th Quarters

FY19-20, 4th Quarter - Permits Applied & Turnaround
147 Permit Applications Submitted; 2.95 Days Avg. Turnaround



Report on Planning and Development Department Permitting Processes

FY19-20, 3rd & 4th Quarters

	FY18-19 3 rd Quarter/FY19-20 4 th Quarter	FY18-19 4 th Quarter/FY19-20 4 th Quarter	FY19-20 1 st Quarter	FY19-20 2 nd Quarter
Total Number of Permits	191/213	136/147	111	134
Avg. Turnaround	8.89/4.19 days	5.11/2.95 days	4.72 days	4.23 days
Residential Projects				
Total Number of Permits	164/182	102/135	91	116
Avg. Turnaround	8.68/4.00 days	4.97/2.80 days	4.21 days	4.16 days
Commercial Projects				
Total Number of Permits	27/31	34/12	20	18
Avg. Turnaround	10.25/5.19 days	5.38/4.58 days	6.90 days	3.83 days