

The Times of India 07.10.2014

BDA drags its feet over plan approval

BHUBANESWAR: The Bhubaneswar Development Authority is taking an average 104 days to approve a building plan compared to the stipulation of maximum 60 days set in the Odisha Right to Public Services Act, 2012. BDA authorization is a must to begin any construction by individuals or real estate developers in the state capital.

BDA plan approval figures between March 2013 and September released on its website bdabbsr.in, shows the planning branch disposed only around 21 per cent applications within 60 days. The time to dispose plan approval applications ranged from a minimum seven days to maximum of over 400 days in the period.

Though Odisha implemented the right to public service in January 2013, building plan approval was brought under purview of the Act two months later in March that year.

BDA data showed it disposed of 3,829 applications between March 2013 and September 2014. Of them, 3,599 applications were approved while the remaining 230 were rejected. Only

814 applications (21.25%) were disposed in 60 days while the rest exceeded the upper time limit.

The planning branch, led by a member (planning), is responsible for disposing the applications. BDA member (planning) Pitabasa Sahoo, when contacted, declined to comment as he said he was "not authorized to speak to the media".

Another senior BDA officer said the planning branch was missing the deadline because of two major reasons. First, the applicants are not submitting applications that are complete in all respects with all the required documents. Secondly, some applicants did not deposit fees for several months even after their requests were processed. This delayed issuance of the plan approval by the authority. Applications complete in all respects were disposed much earlier than the allowed time of 60 days, he said.

According to provisions of the Act, if the designated officer (junior town planner/assistant town planner) fails to provide the service without sufficient and reasonable cause by the deadline, s/he may be imposed a penalty of Rs 250 per each day of delay and a maximum penalty of Rs 5000.

Developers feel the inordinate delay in plan approval by BDA is because of the complicated process. "The process should be simplified so that it becomes easy to understand and comply with the stipulations for the common man," said Pradipta Kumar Biswasroy, president, Real Estate Developers

Association of Odisha.

Step 2: The architect/engineer/planner prepares a plan following BDA norms, helps the developer fill up the building plan approval form and submits it to the BDA planning branch along with proof of land ownership and fees (for scrutiny and processing). The amount varies depending on project size and type

Step 3: A BDA officer (Amin) or a team (depending on project size) inspects the project site. Depending on their recommendations, the planning branch processes the request and asks developers to submit no objection certificates from the fire department, municipal authorities, highway authorities (if it is located near the highway), among others. Individuals applying to build houses for residential purposes don't need such NOCs

Step 4: The development plan and building plan (DP&BP) committee of the BDA considers the site inspection report and NOCs and issues the plan approval by charging a sanction fee of Rs 15 per square feet. In case of individuals, the assistant town planner of the planning branch issues such approval