

## What kind of community do you want that would make your business successful?

### **Consistency and Proactive Communication**

Customers want to know cost. Code requirements vary, making it hard to put together accurate project budgets for clients.

Once every 3 years during registration city could show any changes in code (pay state and file with city)

Proactive communications would make it possible to build a more accurate budget for clients.

Inspectors aren't consistent.

Reduce procedural delays, response time

Build communication into existing interactions

### **ALL Have Shared Awareness/Understanding of Expectations, Expectations Upfront**

Inspectors coming in for certain things, then they add and create more costs. Inspectors are incentivized to do this by commission.

Are there kickbacks to the state?

Requirements of architectural drawings seems sudden, new – past 90 days

Expectations up front- don't add other things (inspector comes for new window, determines garage door needs to be fixed)

When inspectors come they continually find something else. Other inspectors inspect the inspector before and add new things.

Difference between renters and selling

### **Grandfather- Realistic Expectations of Old vs. New Construction**

Old buildings are inspected like new buildings.

What can be counted/considered for grandfathering?

Old construction is rarely square, plumb etc. making some expectations difficult to meet.

## **State of Michigan**

When you call and go off on tangents to find issues- \$50 re-inspection- have a list and come back with new list

## **Spirit of Partnership**

Need to feel more like a partnership vs. adversarial relationship between builders/contractors and city/inspections- the goal appears to be merely to find fault.

A partnership would support information sharing between inspectors/builders

## **Ownership/Accountability of City**

Mistakes/delays cost builders/contractors money directly. How is the city holding itself/inspectors accountable when they make mistakes/are responsible for delays?

Processes/responses take too long

Be consistent with expectations

## **Staff**

Change city staff

Trainings, capacity, competency of staff

No compassion for a grievance

Response from city is poor

Purpose should be to find compliance, not look for problems

Adversarial attitude

Given what you just said, what are the 2-3 most important issues or concerns? Why?

#### **Culture of City/Attitudes/Mindsets**

Inspector attitudes

Culture of working

Residents don't want inspectors to come into their homes because they are afraid they will get cited for violations other than what the purpose of the inspection is. Residents will do without a permit as a result, which places the contractor in violation.

"The #1 job of the city is to protect the public," comment has created the perception that inspections are to protect the public from contractors/builders when the job of inspectors is to inspect.

Attitude issue is city

Are city staff holding themselves accountable too?

#### **Consistency**

Change/communicate requirements

Architectural drawings are suddenly being required. Is the government making new requirements to create new jobs? Inspector will say, "I don't like it- get an architectural drawing." Seems to be new in Battle Creek and not required in other communities- can they just make new rules?

Concerns with cost variations between Battle Creek and other cities- \$150 vs. \$750

Concerns costs are not consistent among inspectors- some inspectors cut deals, affects budgets

Inspectors have to be licensed. Are inspectors trained? Ongoing training? Consistent?

On the north side especially, contractors have just been pounding boards onto houses for railings and such that aren't square or level and it looks awful. It's like whatever the code is, they will do the absolute minimum. Is this because they are angry? Is there any

concern about appearance?

## What do you think is keeping us from the progress we want?

Lack of effective communication

Lack of accountability

Lack of knowledge, training, competency

Common Sense

Totally different in other communities- they do it within the laws. This city takes it to a different degree.

The state has its rules but they don't want to make a ruling. State is referring it to city. Is it the state vs. the city?

State has codes (minimum of standards).

Attitudes. \*We (contractors) have to change our attitudes as well.

(Note that city recognized issues and convened meetings/conversations.)

Interactions.

Fear of intimidation. Fear of retaliation.

Inspectors come into homes/businesses without invitation.

Inspections are white glove vs. enforcing what's on the code books

## When you think about what we've talked about, what are the kinds of things that could be done that would make a difference?

Liaison officer- between city/builders- to help community grow

Election process for head inspector

How is it filled? Appointed by Susan Bedsole. Susan was the head inspector.

Accountability

**If we came back together in 6 months or a year, what might you see which would tell you that the things we talked about tonight were starting to happen?**

New inspectors

Culture that welcomes and encourages development

Open, increased communication

Consistency with inspectors/enforcement

New Leadership

Need agenda for what will now happen-contractors want to know next steps

Run the city like a business

Feel city is wasting time

Decrease delays and surprise costs

Make costs like other communities

Inspectors are licensed, competent

Attitude will make the first change. Contractors should have the attitude that they don't want to get permits.

**Other notes:**

Request to include notes from previous conversation with notes from this conversation in outgoing email in case someone did not receive the prior notes.

Can we make notes available on city page?

Would like to hear an update at least every 4 weeks.

Rebecca Fleury- Work group will be formed in March. Changes in staffing pending.