

# Inspections Small Group Meeting Notes | 2015

## October 7, 2015 from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. BC City Hall

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Present: Marcie Gillette, Hans Stark, John Sims, Steve Buller, Joe Newman, Annie Stetler, Tom Beuchler, Talia Champlin, Archie Crooks, Laura Otte and Amanda Lankerd

### “Wins”

Impressed by the new draft of the Vacant and Abandoned ordinance- demonstrates thorough listening and responsive action.

Overall packet of draft changes- progress.

Positive feedback from downtown property owner- had a good experience with inspection, appreciated follow-up and demeanor.

Pleased with assistance from office staff in emergency situations.

Very pleased with huge improvements to Festival Market Square.

We now have a process for recourse that we did not have/weren't aware of before (contact department heads, follow up with Marcie as needed to provide opportunity to add details needed to resolve issues).

More is happening now than ever before- credit to Marcie, Rebecca, Amanda, and Laura

### Action item updates and discussion from last meeting:

#### 1. October 20, 2015 City Commission Presentation

-A draft presentation was provided by Annie, Talia and the group. The group decided to postpone the presentation until December 1 to provide time for key action items to be completed- such as filling the Chief Building Official position and passing the revised Vacant and Abandoned ordinance.

The group sees the draft presentation as a foundation for the final product.

**2. Overview of proposed Vacant & Abandoned Ordinance changes**

**3. Draft of the revised Vacant & Abandoned Ordinance**

-Note that the amount of revisions left little remaining from the original ordinance

-Discussion of definition of vacant vs. abandoned and “vacant and abandoned structure” as outlined in the ordinance and implications for people maintaining unoccupied properties.

**4. Overview of Inspections Process suggestions**

**5. Revised Inspections Processes**

-Siding: Question regarding what the requirement for siding is at the State level. Recognition of potential to revise/remove requirement, noting it was situationally implemented due to the high volume of siding needs generated by a hail storm

-Roofing: Currently not required to have a permit to cover one layer of shingles. Feeling that inspections are not consistent and should be done *during* the process to confirm there is one layer.

-Zoning: what is the specified time frame for turnaround?

- Re-inspection of Violations – Request to explore the possibility for an owner or contractor to submit photos of corrected conditions in substitute of an inspector conducting a re-inspection

**6. AMSA Construction Board of Appeals Application**

- Suggestion that the application require that a copy of the Violation Notice with photos be included with the submission of the appeal request
- Suggestions to improve the timeliness of the boards review of appeals
  - o Have City Clerk provide the appeal application to the board when checking availability to meet for review. Also include section of the Act or Code in question and determination / justification of the Trade Inspector.

- Have a written process available so that all parties are aware of and understand process and expectations.
- Add phone number and email to application

#### 7. Building Plan Review Process

- A new, organized space has been created by staff to more efficiently go through the building plan review process. Staff utilized existing space and storage equipment to create the dedicated space- saving thousands of dollars in costs.
- Plan reviews will take place on Tuesdays and Fridays at 9 a.m. to allow for staff to meet and review plans together.
- With the revised process, only *two* sets of plans are required. When approved, one set will be given back indicating approval to be placed on-site per regulations. The other set will be scanned internally and placed on file for record keeping purposes.
- The group was invited to see the building plan review space after the meeting

#### 8. Permit Review Process

**Other questions:**

What is the wait time in other areas for inspections? 3 days?

What is the wait time from application to permit?

Why does it take so long to issue a permit?

How could this be expedited so that's less than 3-5 days?

Could the CBO sign/issue permits to expedite the process?

#### Identified Opportunities and Next Steps:

- Further review documents provided by Marcie, send feedback electronically to the whole group
- Look into the reasoning at the State level that delays issuance of permits (i.e. requiring that a Trade Inspector sign permit applications prior to issuance)
- Compile a list of communities that have adopted a Vacant and Abandoned Ordinance
- Work with City Clerk to streamline AMSA Construction Board of Appeals process
- Further prepare for December 1 presentation to commission

**Our Shared Commitments:**

1. **Transparency**- as agreed upon in the previous meeting, the small group would like to continue making notes and documents publicly accessible
2. **Confidentiality**- the group feels it is important to be mindful of how matters are discussed, particularly identifying staff or partners by name and the implications of attribution of comments
3. **Responsibility to be Advocates and Champions**- believing in Battle Creek, committing to sharing positive stories of the progress the group has made, and agreeing to serve as helpful resource in the community when people or partners the group encounters expresses a concern or negative comment is important to the group.

**Next Meeting**

**Wednesday, November 4th from 2:00-3:30pm, City Hall Conference Room 302A**