

Inspections Small Group Meeting Notes 2015

April 29, 2015 from 1:30 – 3 p.m., BC City Hall

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

Rebecca Fleury opened the meeting by giving a brief history of the work and why the City is engaging in this process. She reviewed the timeline that indicated work accomplished to date.

Members of the small group introduced themselves and were asked to share their experience to-date in conversations and/or why they chose to participate in this group. Many expressed this effort and process has made more forward progress now than in years past, resulting in more action than previous efforts to address challenges and opportunities related to inspections. However, the group recognized additional work is needed to create a more business friendly environment.

Participants were asked to share thoughts on what they aspire to accomplish in partnership with the City of Battle Creek:

- The City would create a one-stop shop to get questions answered about inspections, code and rental inspections.
- Inspectors would have a one-look process where they would only be inspecting what they have been asked to inspect (inspectors wouldn't be looking for additional violations).
- The Inspections Department would exercise reasonable application of current codes to older homes.
- There would be reasonable expectations for those that can do the work (licensed vs. owner).
- All parties would have a comprehensive understanding of local ordinance vs. state law.
- All parties would understand inspection processes, procedures and responsibilities (between the City, contractors, residents, etc.)
- Stronger communication between city staff and the public (contractors, residents, etc.). Examples include: checklists available to help identify what to do/steps to take to pull building permits, how to take a house off from the vacant/abandoned housing list, staff accessibility/responsiveness, knowledge of appeals process and more)
- Stronger relationships between the city and the community (mutual accountability, clear communication, etc.)

For more information regarding conversation notes contact:

Amanda Lankerd, Project Manager for Project 20/20 - (269) 830-1936 or bcproject2020@gmail.com
Laura Otte, Project Manager for Beacon Community – (269) 441-1716 or lotte@uwbckr.org

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Members discussed how they will work together in the group:

- Members will communicate via email and will update their email address as needed with City Staff.
- Communication between group members will happen between meetings via email as necessary.
- The group will have standing meetings.
- All meeting notes will be emailed to the attendees of the community conversations to improve transparency and keep the community informed of progress and actions taken.

Next Steps:

- City staff will review internal inspections communications pieces and email them to members.
- Small Group Members will review and provide feedback on communications content, missing information and messaging.
- City staff will review the Inspection Department's website to review information available and ensure clarity regarding the definition of inspections vs. code compliance.
- City staff will send the meeting notes to the original list of attendees.
- City staff will email organizational chart to small group members.
- City staff will create a document that outlines internal process/procedures in the inspections department (please note, this will take some time to translate internal information into usable data for public consumption)

Next Meeting

Thursday, May 28th from 10-11:30 a.m. at City Hall in Conference Room 302A

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