

Inspections Small Group Meeting Notes | 2015

August 12, 2015 from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. BC City Hall

Present: Amanda Lanker, Hans Stark, Steve Bueller, John Sims, Annie Stetler, Laura Otte, Rebecca Fleury, Archie Crooks, Joe Newman and Talia Champlin

“Wins”

To support progress, meetings will open with opportunity to share stories of success seen within the group, their efforts, and the overall community. Comments included:

- The city is starting to get positive feedback about inspections and the process.
- Despite personal/work challenges, we’re still continuing to meet.
- The customer service initiatives within the city is a positive
- Monthly billing option for inspections, if in good standing with the city, is a convenience for contractors.
- The group asked for all of Community Development Department updates (Chief Building Official/Neighborhood Asset Manager, etc.) be placed in the “wins” category.

Action Updates from Last Meeting

The group reviewed actions from the last meeting.

- The group will send any suggestions or revisions for previously sent documents (FAQs etc. sent by Marcie in May, June) to Marcie
 - Update – Annie will ask Tom to send updates (on FAQs, etc. sent by Marcie in May, June) to Marcie. No other updates were received.
- The group will review the root cause chain to see if anything from the conversation data is missing
 - Update – The group would like another copy of the root cause chain emailed to them for review and will send any suggested changes before the next meeting.
- Marcie will review and assess previous efforts related to Vacant and Abandoned properties and email the actions proposed from those efforts
 - A copy of recommended changes to the Vacant and Abandoned ordinance was distributed to the group.
 - The group would like documents to be emailed to them ahead of the meeting so that they have time to review them and come to the meeting prepared to share comments and discuss with the group.
 - The group will review the revisions and get back to Marcie with suggested changes.
 - The group would like an electronic version of the Vacant and Abandoned (V/A) ordinance. They would also like emailed copies of Chapter 1460 (as it was referred to in the V/A ordinance). In addition, the group requested an email

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copy of the safety checklist that was previously distributed at a small group meeting.

- John will email notes and observations from review of Vacant and Abandoned policies and procedures to the group
 - No information was emailed beforehand but the group committed to providing comments/feedback before the next meeting.
- Annie will reconnect with the realtors to include their concerns and suggestions in discussion
 - Talia committed to get feedback from realtors on the revised V/A ordinance and share their comments with the small group.

Other Updates

The group requested the Mayor's presence at small group meetings. The Mayor is very interested in this process and would like to help in any way possible. Note was made of the need to be mindful of the open meetings act if other Commissioners attend the small group meetings. A potential role suggested for the Mayor is to support communication of City Staff and progress updates to the Commission as needed.

Also, Tom Schweitzer emailed the group indicating a conflict on the standing meeting date/time. The group decided that the standing meeting should be moved to accommodate Tom's availability. A doodle poll will be emailed to the group to determine the next meeting date. Several dates were not good for the group including: Thursdays, the 2nd Wednesday and the 4th Wednesday. Afternoons appear to work the best.

Identify Next Steps, Action Items, Leads and Commitments

Rebecca provided an update on behalf of Marcie regarding actions the City is taking to better serve the community. It was requested that staffing changes/positions be kept CONFIDENTIAL until they are posted on the City website.

- City staff is in the process of hiring a Code Compliance Manager. They anticipate that the person selected for the position will begin during the first week of September.
- The position of Chief Building Official will be reactivated. It is anticipated that the position will be posted to the public within two weeks. The Chief Building Official will supervise the Inspections Division.
- A new position, Neighborhood Asset Administrator, will be created. The position will be shared between the Police Department and Community Services Department to address neighborhood issues and conditions that are cross departments. Internal staffing shifts will happen to fulfill this role.

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- A bid is being developed to contract the work of safety inspections. This will allow for greater consistency and quicker turn around for residents in need of this type of inspections.
- A new area for Plan Review will be complete within the week. The new location will provide Trade Inspectors the space needed for them to meet together for staff discussion and review. Also, new Plan Review processes are being developed to improve timeliness, staff efficiency and customer follow-up.

In addition, the group discussed the opportunity to present to the City Commission. The Mayor thought this might be a good way to update the Commission and public on progress made. A sub-committee comprised of Talia and Annie was created to develop a draft presentation for review by the small group. It was suggested that the end goals are presented (which correlates to the root cause analysis) and the actions taken to support the City to become more business friendly. The tentative date for a presentation is October.

The next item the group wants to work on is the appeals process. The group requested that all documents related to the appeals process be emailed to them (process documents, communications materials, etc.).

Summary of Commitments

- Annie will ask Tom to send updates (on FAQs, etc. sent by Marcie in May, June) to Marcie.
- The group would like another copy of the root cause chain emailed to them for review and will send any suggested changes before the next meeting.
- The group will review the Vacant and Abandoned ordinance revisions and get back to Marcie with suggested changes.
- City staff will email a copy of the Vacant and Abandoned (V/A) ordinance, Chapter 1460 (as it was referred to in the V/A ordinance) and the safety checklist that was previously distributed at a small group meeting.
- Talia committed to get feedback from realtors on the revised V/A ordinance and share their comments with the small group.
- The group committed to sharing the Chief Building Official job posting when it's posted on the City's website.
- Annie and Talia will meet to create a draft presentation to City Commission and will share with the group their recommendations.
- City staff will email documents and information to the group about the appeals process.
- A doodle poll will be sent out to the group to determine the new standing meeting date and time

Next Meeting

To be determined – a link to Doodle poll will be emailed to set the next meeting date/time.

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.