

Inspections Small Group Meeting Notes | 2015

July 14, 2015 from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. BC City Hall

Present: Marcie Gillette, Hans Stark, John Sims, Steve Bueller, Joe Neuman, Annie Stetler, Rebecca Fleury, Laura Otte and Amanda Lanker

“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:

Still meeting.

Increased opportunity to work with residents with safety inspections, getting people into homes, focus on getting to compliance first.

See a lot of progress, we're business owners so we're used to throwing assets at a problem. Love that we are still meeting and working together.

We have been getting excellent customer service lately- more flexible and responsive.

Setting a standing meeting

The group agreed to meet on the second Wednesday of every month from 2:00-3:30pm (City Hall- Conference Room 302 A)

Review Our Commitment to Each Other and the Group

The group discussed recent events, including a meeting convened by members of the small group and the mayor's decision to support communications between the commission and the small group. They affirmed their shared goal of creating a more business friendly community and agreed transparency, confidentiality, and responsibility to be advocates and champions is important to accomplishing that goal together.

Root Cause Chain

A root cause chain was created from comments made in community conversations with residents, builders, contractors etc. related to inspections. This draft was introduced to the group and opened to discussion.

City Manager Rebecca Fleury noted the document will be helpful in discussion of prioritizing budget items.

The group noted that although some comments may have felt like outliers, it is important to consider other perspectives to be successful in their efforts. Some expressed finding the process of theming conversation data a stretch from how they are used to addressing problems, which led them to convene.

The root cause chain will serve as a tool to guide the work and thinking of the group as it establishes next steps and actions towards creating a more business friendly environment.

Discuss Presentation to the City Commission

From recent discussion with the Mayor, it was suggested the group consider how and when it communicates success and progress to the City Commission. The group thought a presentation would be a good idea, but that they didn't feel ready for that yet.

Other suggestions offered for future consideration were:

- hold an open house of city departments to re-launch their commitment to the community
- draft a collective letter to the commission
- send an article to the Shopper

The group may look to set a date for a presentation several months out.

Identified Opportunities and Next Steps:

Discussion of need to focus energies on a specific area and establish some wins. It was suggested the group finish working on issues and opportunities related to Vacant and Abandoned Buildings, including verifying that buildings are inspected according to the code when they are built, versus the current code, and modifying language in the ordinances to include more specific information.

As a result, the following commitments were made:

- The group will send any suggestions or revisions for previously sent documents (FAQs etc. sent by Marcie in May, June) to Marcie

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- The group will review the root cause chain to see if anything from the conversation data is missing
- Marcie will review and assess previous efforts related to Vacant and Abandoned properties and email the actions proposed from those efforts
- John will email notes and observations from review of Vacant and Abandoned policies and procedures to the group
- Annie will reconnect with the realtors to include their concerns and suggestions in discussion

Next Meeting

Wednesday, August 12 from 2:00-3:30pm, City Hall Conference Room 302A

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.

For more information regarding conversation notes contact:

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