

Inspections Small Group Meeting NOTES | 2016

January 6, 2016 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. BC City Hall

Attendees: Hans Stark, Amanda Lanker, Steve Bueller, John Sims, Laura Otte, Joe Newman, Annie Stetler, Talia Champlin, Tom Buechler

Welcome – 5 minutes

The group noted a few changes to the December 2nd meeting notes. Hans is missing from the list of attendees. Also, under the “additional work” section, in the first sentence “contractors” should be changed to “homeowners.” The discussion was about code compliance and the threatening letters sent via that department.

Wins – 10 minutes

Experiencing good response from city with Vacant and Abandoned homes- point is properties are not left to deteriorate.

Reflection and Planning:

Where are we at? Where do we want to go? And what will it take to get there?- 60 minutes

Shared quote about progress in another community, “You proceed at the speed of trust.”

Review of Action Plan: All were asked to review the action plan to assess progress and identify what needs to be in place and/or worked on in the New Year.

On page 3 of the action plan regarding AMSA procedure, the small group noted that it would be helpful to also have the estimated time frame for the dispute to be settled so that contractors can plan accordingly and decide if they want to pursue it.

On page 4, regarding plan review, some of the dates should be January 2016 (instead of 2015).

Lastly, on page 5, regarding the vacant and abandoned ordinance revision, some small group members were unsure if they received the amended ordinance. Request to have Marcie send it out to make sure everyone reviews it.

During this time, examples of recent challenges were shared. Talia offered to assist with listing challenges and how they may be handled differently in neighboring communities. A recommendation to consider capturing these opportunities on an ongoing basis was made, including developing a chart or other mechanism to help communicate the “why” and “what can we do” related to challenges. A *fictitious* example of what a chart might look was provided in a subsequent email to Talia and is captured below:

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Situation	Challenge	How it's handled in nearby communities	Suggestions to improve Battle Creek procedure/policy	Local, state regulations to consider	What's needed to make the change in Battle Creek
Need two inspections for grounding rod in footing	Time delay between inspections puts concrete at risk of freezing and delays contractor completion of work	One inspection by Chief Building Official (Emmett Township)	Look to streamline the process to one inspection		Chief Building Official on-board City Commission vote

A couple of issues were also discussed regarding specific properties. Small group member agreed to discuss these issues directly with Marcie. Another example was shared regarding a commissioner asking to have a bulldozer removed from a property. Talia offered to help address that situation.

Discussion of the action plan:

What stands out to you?

- Note that reference to “city staff” in the responsibility column often means Marcie.
- Sense that a lot of accomplishments were in meetings and building the foundation for work moving forward (building understanding of the issues, developing better relationships among city staff and small group members and understanding process/procedures) .

What possibilities are there for moving ahead? Where do we want to go?

- Finish what was started in 2016.
- Interest in having opportunity to sit down with Chief Building Official when hired.
- Note that work of committee and action plan will be helpful to the new Chief Building Official.
- Continue working to ensure processes and procedures are business friendly and interpretations among inspectors are consistent and we take a proactive vs. responsive approach.
- Suggestion to consider having a monthly AMSA meeting already set up. Ongoing challenges could then be discussed at the meeting without the challenge of scheduling (use meeting wizard instead of emailing back and forth).

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What do we need to get there?

Capacity- (examples: staff, team, partners etc.)

One participant noted that capacity to continue meeting monthly may be limited. Suggestion to all to stay connected through email etc. and attend/participate as able.

Structure- (examples: meeting schedule, roles at meetings, work in between meetings)

Group decided to keep the standing meeting for now- 1st Wednesday of every month from 2:00-3:30pm in Conference Room 302A City Hall. The group stated they do not need/expect reminders for the meeting.

(Note: due to time constraints, agenda items below (highlighted in grey) were not discussed. We will work to address them in the next meeting.)

- **Our Shared Commitments 2015 (listed below): How did we do? Did we hold ourselves accountable to these commitments? What did we learn? What would we do differently in the future?**
- 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.
- **What will be our shared commitments for 2016? Do we need to revise the list? Add to it? Start fresh with a new one?**
- **What are our expectations? How will we confirm these expectations are understood and shared?**
- **How will we hold ourselves accountable moving forward?**
- **Working together in 2016: How we will handle challenges? How will we handle opportunities?**

Identify/Review Next Steps, Action Items, Leads and Commitments – 10 minutes

- Amanda will ask Marcie to send out the revised vacant and abandoned ordinance to the small group
- Small group members will talk to Marcie about specific property challenges (if they haven't already)
- Talia will follow-up with individuals regarding the situation with the City Commissioner and bulldozer.
- Amanda will revise the December notes to reflect the additions/amendments
- Amanda will ask Marcie to update the action plan based on the additions provided above

Closing – 5 minutes

Next Meeting: Meetings are regularly scheduled on the first Wednesday of every month from 2:00-3:30pm at City Hall in Conference Room 302A.

Wednesday, February 3, 2016, 2:00-3:30pm City Hall Conference Rm 302 A