



Permitting and Inspections Department

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Permit Reform Advisory Committee

Monday October 18, 2021

Draft Meeting Minutes

Location: 645 Pine Street & Virtual

Committee Members present: Celia Daly, Steve Lipkin, Steve Offenhartz, Bob Duncan, Tiki-Jon Archambeau

Staff: Bill Ward, Director

Pat Schmitz, Project Manager

Meeting called to order at 12:33 p.m.

Motion to amend and approve the agenda by Bob Duncan moving Item 6 on the Agenda to item #3 to allow the members of the public to hear the proposal prior to comment. Seconded by Steve Offenhartz. Approval was unanimous.

Motion to approve the minutes from the prior meeting was made by Steve Offenhartz and seconded by Tiki Archambeau. Approval was unanimous.

Item 3) Bill provided an update Electrical permit update. This included 5 items. 1) Optimizing the scheduled inspection route to more efficiently use the inspector's time. 2) Reduce the items we require a permit for by exempting specific types of permits like device replacement and similar projects, 3) Move heat pump inspections to be a task for the Plumbing and Mechanical Inspector. 4) Add part time or full time help by hiring an additional employee with an increase in the permit fee to pay for this. 5) Legal review of policy on remote inspections.

Public Forum – Darlene Leclair from Lakeside Electric spoke about the need for additional inspector. She highly recommended the addition of a part time or full time inspector to help with the workload. She noted that Tim is a great inspector and she would appreciate the ability to have fewer permit requirements on small items and the addition of remote inspections when possible.

Jonathan Quong from New England Electric said that it seemed like everyone acknowledges that we need another inspector. Currently the next available inspection is one month away, November 15th. If someone has to keep their sheetrock open for an inspection over a week that wastes everyone's time. He noted that rescheduling inspections for route efficiency has caused some problems with property owners who have to change their plans too. He recommended scheduling by North end or South End inspections by specific day might be more efficient, or a "contractor day" for inspections. He agreed that more remote inspections would be helpful.

David Boldwin from COD Electric said that the delayed inspection schedule has always been a problem and the delay can cause hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars. He said increase the permit fee and hire another inspector.



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Robert Golden from Rise above Construction Company spoke about his experience in having to wait 3 weeks for a small electrical issue which held up the entire project. He was also in favor of eliminating device replacement/small issues from permit requirements. He said the minimum permit fee should be raised to be able to hire another person to help speed up inspections.

Item 5 was the Committee make up and the Election of Committee Chair and Vice Chair. Bill reported that while Tiki was no longer on the DPW Commission he was originally appointed when he was a member so he was encouraged by the Mayor's office to continue his participation if he remained interested.

Celia Daly announced that she was stepping down as the Chair but will remain as an active committee member. Bob nominated Tiki as the new Chair. This was Seconded by Steve. The vote was unanimous. Celia nominated Steve Offenhartz to remain as the Vice-Chair. Seconded by Bob. The vote was unanimous.

Item 6 was an update on Chapter 8 of Burlington City ordinance related to Building Permits. Bill gave an overview of administrative changes in the draft changes. These included changing the names DPW to Department of Permitting and Inspections and things like changing Board of Aldermen to City Council in the ordinance. Brad Biggie gave an overview of the substantive draft change which proposes the language change in the ordinance to reflect the language of the State of Vermont Code requirements for submission of Construction documents prepared by a registered design professional, noting that the requirements can be waived based on the size, use, occupancy or complexity of the work. Bob noted that the state of Vermont has a provision noting that public building projects with a value of construction costs less than \$200,000 do not require stamped construction documents.

Bill noted that there will be additional changes to the draft to include updating the male pronouns in the current ordinance to be gender neutral as we have a male and female building official. Bill let the board members know that he would send an electronic copy of the draft to board members following the meeting.

Steve Offenhartz made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Tiki. The vote was unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 1:38 p.m.