



CITY OF AURORA
BUILDING CODE & CONTRACTOR'S APPEALS & STANDARDS BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, January 11, 2022, 3:00 P.M.
VIRTUAL TEAMS MEETING, BUILDING DIVISION

MINUTES:

Present:

Michael Aitken, Chair, Building Code and Contractor's Appeals & Standards Board
John Dougherty, Building Code and Contractor's Appeals & Standards Board
Greg Echols, Building Code and Contractor's Appeals & Standards Board
Tim Green, Building Code and Contractor's Appeals & Standards Board
Scott Berg, Chief Building Official
Jose Rodriguez, Plans Review Manager
Mike Dean, Life Safety Plans Review Manager
Dora Shols, Permit Technician Supervisor

Absent:

Alecia Peabody, Building Code and Contractor's Appeals & Standards Board

Introduction:

Michael Aitken called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Request for Modifications – Mike Dean, Fire/Life Safety Manager

Mike Dean supplied a brief explanation on the approval processes for requests for modifications and alternative methods. He explained that the 3 requests for modifications being discussed in today's meeting utilize alternative Factory Mutual standards to meet the fire sprinkler density standards associated to high-piled combustible storage configurations. The FM standards are one viable option that provides designers and our jurisdictions equivalent protection standards to overcome the shortfalls of the NFPA height limitations. Once the initial review of the designer's request takes place within the Building Division the request is sent to the Fire Marshal's office for their review and assessment. This process reflects the collaborative relationship between the Fire Department and Building Division to ensure the combined high-piled racking system and fire sprinkler system meets or exceeds our adopted standards. Michael Aitken asked if any of the three requests for alternative methods were close to denial. Mike explained the applicant must prove that it is an equivalency to the code. A lot of eyes look at these requests. Michael asked about the engineer letter that was written in March however the official request was not submitted until late September. Mike explained like a plan review, a corrections notice is given, and they do not accept the request for modification until it is complete.

There were no further questions or comments.

Agenda Item 2 – 4th Quarter Building Activity Recap

Scott said the only area that was not drastically higher than last year was single family permits, which was only 11 more homes than last year to 2,066 versus 2,055. Despite supply chain issues there is still a healthy workload. Permits and reviews are up 14% and 12% from last year. Inspections, if you take away Gaylord from 3 years ago which had 66,000 inspections over 3 years, 2021 is the 2nd highest total in the past 37 years. For last year we averaged 555 inspections a day. There was a time where 300 or 400 inspections was a busy day. A request was made in the Fall for four more inspectors. With a lighter workload, they will be able to mentor and conduct more onsite training. Experienced framing inspectors can grab 3 or 4 inspectors and give a quick one-hour lesson on roof framing for example.

Phone calls to the Permit Center were up from last year. The goal is to answer phone calls within 30 seconds. This staff add inspection requests, answer construction questions and permit questions. Those calls do not include the fact that 70% of all inspection request are self-scheduled online by the customer.

Revenues were up 23% from the previous year. The fee schedule and flat fees for counter permits is working. Staff in all areas are busy. Every department across the city has established customer service performance measures including the call center which has a goal of 90% and we hit 87% for an average with staffing issues; our other areas hit the 90% or greater goal for the entire year despite all the increases in workloads.

Michael asked if they had any other staffing issues. Scott stated the Building Division is looking for another Permit Technician, Plan Reviewer, Life Safety Plan Reviewer. We also need an Administrative person to help offload tasks that has been absorbed by management staff so they can do more of their own jobs. John Dougherty (Jack) asked if staff were affected by COVID. Scott said not recently however all areas were affected at one time. They had more issues with positive cases within office workers than field workers.

Scott also mentioned they hit 800 inspections for a day in November, they were not all able to be completed, but that is how many were requested. David and the supervisors visit job sites, they track pass/fail rates by contractor and cancellation rates. 6% or 8% of all inspections every day were cancelled inspections. Customers would schedule inspections for the day then called and then cancelled it because they weren't ready. David had to get the word out that if they are not ready for an inspection do not call it in because they are hurting their peers and themselves in the long run. They also noticed by analyzing numbers that Fridays were the highest workloads for inspections so they made an operations change and reduced the number of people that could be off on Fridays. They are tweaking it as much as they can, but at a certain point, they just need more bodies.

With all the interactions that staff has with the public there were no complaints on customer service for the entire year for the building division. They get phone calls for somebody who is not happy they have to get a permit, or they did not pass inspection, but they are treating customers well and it is nice to hear positive things about the group. They work extremely hard to try to hire the right people.

There were no further questions or comments.

Agenda Item 3 – 2021 International Code Adoption

It became effective as an alternative if somebody wants to build in the 2021 code as of Saturday, January 8th, 2022. However, Scott started receiving code issue calls primarily from residential developers about product shortages. For example, Lennar called saying they cannot get several insulation products until the end of the year so Scott made the decision to extend the 6-month window until the end of October instead of making them redesign the insulation envelope, upgrade windows and spends an extra \$5,000 on a house where the consumer will end up paying for it. He will keep an eye on it and monitor what is going on. Before the meeting, the software ResCheck was not caught up for the 2021 codes. Jose Rodriguez checked and only the web version for ResCheck was released.

There were no further questions or comments.

Agenda Item 4 – Code Training Classes for Board

Scott mentioned they will send some people for the in-person classes in Loveland however the EduCode classes in Las Vegas will be virtual. If the Board is interested in the Colorado Chapter classes, the first week of March in Loveland they will email Dora to signing up. Jose will send the Colorado Chapter information to the Board.

There were no further questions or comments.

Agenda Item 5 – 2022 Meetings Dates and Chair/Vice-Chair selections

Michael asked if the second Tuesday of each quarter worked for everybody. Everyone agreed. The next item was Chair and Vice-Chair. Michael is still chair however offered if somebody wanted to be Chair, they are welcome. Jack moved to continue with the current Chair and Vice-Chair. Jack will continue to be Vice-Chair. Tim and Greg motioned to keep the current Chair and Vice-Chair. Michael said it has always been a pleasure working on this committee

There were no further questions or comments.

Agenda Item 6 –Other items for discussion

Michael said next virtual meeting will be April 12th.

There were no other questions or comments.

Michael Aitken adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.



Chair, Michael Aitken

February 25, 2022

Date