



## MURRAY CITY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Murray City Municipal Council met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, September 18, 2012, in the Murray City Center, Conference Room #107, 5025 South State Street, Murray Utah.

### Members in Attendance:

Jim Brass	Council Chair
Dave Nicponski	Council Member
Darren V. Stam	Council Member
Jared A. Shaver	Council Vice Chair
Brett A. Hales	Council Member

### Others in Attendance:

Dan Snarr	Mayor	Tim Tingey	ADS Director
Janet M. Lopez	Council Administrator	Jan Wells	Mayor's Chief of Staff
Frank Nakamura	City Attorney	Pete Fondaco	Police Chief
Jennifer Kennedy	City Recorder	Peri Kinder	Valley Journals
Sally Hoffelmeyer-Katz	Citizen	Jennifer Brass	Citizen

Chairman Brass called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:50 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance.

### Minutes

Mr. Brass asked for corrections or action on the minutes from the Committee of the Whole meeting held on August 21, 2012. Mr. Shaver moved approval as corrected. Mr. Stam seconded and the motion was approved 5-0.

### Business Item #1:                      Building Division Report – Tim Tingey

This presentation was a continuation of a report a few weeks earlier, Mr. Tingey stated. He pointed out that the work that the building division has a need for continual improvement as they work with numerous developers, contractors and customers. Mr. Gonzales looks for ways to improve the process and get the plans out in a timely manner. He feels the department does a good job.

There was a recent article in the "Utah Business" magazine entitled *Red Tape*. It was a fairly negative article about communities and the permitting processes written by some retail developers. Reading from that article, Mr. Tingey said, "On the other hand, Sandy is pretty good, Provo provides unbelievable support and Murray is another city that seems to have its act together. Murray City turns around a review plan in eight days and that makes us wonder why it is so difficult in other cities. What is the difference, he asked?" It reflects on the work that Mr. Gonzales and his staff do and we have a good reputation to be proud of, Mr. Tingey complimented.

Mr. Gonzales commented that he talked with the author of that article, Mr. Lucero, and argued that Murray does have its act together not just seems to. The turnaround all depends on the type of plans submitted and the completeness of them.

The purpose of building codes is to give reasonable assurance that your building is safe from structural failure or fire hazards, although there is no guarantee. It also provides a permanent record as to whether permits were taken, final inspections took place and if the certificate of occupancy was given. When someone wants to refinance and include value for a basement finish, if there were no permit, many times the value may not be included.

Only a minimum code is required so that means that if an earthquake occurs the building may still sustain significant damage. He did not know of any buildings constructed above the minimum code requirements. Commercial buildings are built to a higher minimum standard. Intermountain Medical Center is a "defend in place building," meaning that they could not get the patients out and must withstand the damage. It would be the safest place during an emergency.

Mr. Gonzales reviewed that the Uniform Building Code Commission adopts building codes every three years. This commission will be making a recommendation to the Business and Labor Interim Committee to adopt the 2012 Codes including the International Plumbing Code (IPC), International Building Code (IBC), International Residential Code (IRC), International Mechanical Code and the 2012 Energy Conservation Code. If these are adopted the new buildings constructed under this code will be 30% more energy efficient. Some controversy exists on that. It would take about six to seven years to recoup that expense. The last energy code was adopted in 2010 and this 2012 code has been amended heavily. If approved these codes go into effect July 1, 2013. He pointed out that former parapet inspection requirements had been deleted from the code after being included for 20 years.

Mr. Gonzales described the core functions of the Building Department.

Plan reviews can be as minor as a basement finish or as complicated as a 15 story structure. It is one of the most critical things done and can save an owner and contractor time and money.

Minor plan reviews are taken care of at the counter whenever possible, such as electrical service change, water heater, furnace or roofs. This prevents the customer from returning a second time. It is a good idea to strap water heaters whether they are gas or electric. Mr. Stam asked if all reviews are done in house or sent out. Mr. Gonzales said structural permits for major projects are sent out.

Mr. Nicponski asked how many people do plan reviews. Two employees conduct the plan reviews. Some inspectors want to learn how to do that, so Mr. Gonzales will allow them to

do minor reviews. Mr. Shaver added that two reviewers may not be sufficient when construction picks back up again. The Mayor mentioned that during the construction of the hospital it was necessary to bring in additional help because the small jobs were not getting done. Some people are willing to do that on a part time basis. Projects have been sent out; however, when the City does that the inspections are difficult because they are not familiar with the plan.

Electronic plan review is something Mr. Gonzales would like the City to convert to. Salt Lake City is doing that as well as other cities across the country. Once staff gets through the learning curve, he feels less time will be necessary for the reviews. Design professionals like it. The plan would be uploaded to a site and the City would do just what they do on a paper plan then it goes out electronically. Mark ups can be done on line.

Mr. Tingey remarked that the software package for that had been requested in the CIP (Capital Improvement Program) plan.

Inspections are done thoroughly and consistently. Uniformity is an important issue. The staff is happy to explain violations and point out where it is in the Code.

The department assigns a number to each inspection and gives out a card so that the results can be viewed on line. The staff has no problem addressing questions as they arise. The department had completed about 4,600 inspections year to date since January.

Special inspectors are required based on the plan. Years ago each inspector held one certification, for example, masonry, concrete, fireproofing, welding, however as the economy went bad the special inspectors began to get multiple certifications and qualifications. The City monitors them to make sure they are following the approved plan and does not succumb to pressure from contractors. The minimum code must be followed.

All Murray inspectors and plans examiners are full four-way licensed by the State of Utah. We can send one inspector to look at all four areas: building, electrical, plumbing and mechanical. Some jurisdictions have to send out multiple inspectors. Mr. Tingey confirmed how nice it is to have the staff cross trained in these areas.

Mr. Shaver asked about the training for these certifications for building inspectors and special inspectors. Mr. Gonzales replied that the building inspectors must have training CEU (continuing education) credits to renew their license every two years. The managers monitor that to make sure the license requirements are in place and some training is done in house. The City is beginning new code training now. Special inspectors also have a lot of training to keep their license. The building inspectors are required to be licensed by the State of Utah; whereas, the special inspectors do not. We must approve the special inspectors by education and experience. If the building inspectors see that they have missed something then the City can write a discrepancy report.

Coordination of plan approval is something Murray does very well. The City has a "one stop shop" for plan approval. These are dropped off at the building inspection office and a checklist is initiated to determine if everything is there. An email is sent out to all the different departments, including Fire, Community and Economic Development, Water, and Sewer to inform them that a set of plans is ready for their review. All the inspectors come into their office, Mr. Gonzales explained. Concerns are addressed there and the turnaround is about eight days. The City understands that time is money for the developers.

The department encourages contractors to sit down with staff to discuss the project and give insight so that when plans are submitted there are no major flaws, like the need for an elevator. Building and Fire departments are the major areas of concern.

Business License inspections take place from Mr. Gonzales' department, as well. This is to ensure that the building has a certificate of occupancy. They issue permits and partial permits, such as on a structural shell.

Mr. Nicponski asked what the average time is to issue a permit. Mr. Gonzalez said that they try to turn around an initial plan review in 10 to 15 days on larger projects, such as 10,000 square feet on a commercial building. Residential initial plan review is only three to five days. Then usually a temporary certificate of occupancy is issued if there are no life safety issues outstanding.

Currently, Hooper Knowlton is looking for temporary certificate of occupancy (TCO) on 66 units of the first three floors of their apartment complex. They would like that by the first of January; therefore, we have informed them of all the life safety provisions that must be satisfied to be approved.

Mr. Gonzales explained that the department also follows up on outstanding inspections. He related that four years prior 1,700 outstanding inspections existed. That is an inspection that has not taken place in 180 days. Currently, there are only 140 outstanding inspections.

Mr. Gonzales read the mission statement for the department, "The Murray City Building Inspection Division tries to provide courteous and consistent plan review and inspections of the adopted building code in a timely manner." He feels the department does a good job as it tries to also be a great resource for the community.

Mayor Snarr noted that General Growth contractors and architects were extremely appreciative of the Murray City Building Department during the expansion and remodel of Fashion Place Mall. The hospital was challenging due to the size.

Mr. Brass adjourned the meeting at 6:24 p.m.

Janet M. Lopez  
Council Administrator