

**BUILDING INSPECTION COMMISSION (BIC)
Department of Building Inspection (DBI)**

REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, June 19, 2013 at 9:30 a.m.

City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 416

Aired Live on SFGTV Channel 78

ADOPTED September 18, 2013

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Building Inspection Commission was called to order at 9:58 a.m. by President McCarthy.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call – Roll call was taken and a quorum was certified.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Angus McCarthy, **President**

Frank Lee, **Commissioner** (Left at 11:35 a.m.)

James McCray, Jr. **Commissioner**

Debra Walker, **Commissioner**

Sonya Harris, **Secretary**

Warren Mar, **Vice-President**

Kevin Clinch, **Commissioner**

Myrna Melgar, **Commissioner**

D.B.I. REPRESENTATIVES:

Tom Hui, **Acting Director**

Edward Sweeney, **Deputy Director, Permit Services**

Daniel Lowrey, **Deputy Director, Inspection Services**

Pamela Levin, **Deputy Director, Administrative Services**

William Strawn, **Communications Manager**

Gayle Revels, **Acting Manager Finance Services**

Hema Nekkanti, **IS Project Director**

CITY ATTORNEY REPRESENTATIVE

John Malamut, **Deputy City Attorney**

President McCarthy requested that several items be called out of order and the rest of the Commissioners agreed. Item #5 was heard first.

- 5. Discussion and possible action regarding proposed ordinance (File No. 130369-2) amending the Building and Health Codes to expand the boundaries and types of projects for which soil testing is required and to require testing of groundwater under specified circumstances; amending the Public Works Code to eliminate soil testing provisions; renumbering code sections in the Health Code; and making environmental findings. (Continued from the BIC hearing of May 15, 2013)**

Ms. Kelly Pretzer of the Mayor's Office gave a follow-up to last month's presentation on File No. 130369-2 regarding the Maher Ordinance. Ms. Pretzer addressed the following points:

- The Maher process is triggered when a building permit is filed no matter which agency it was filed with and the applicant is notified as soon as possible
- The information is available at all times to any member of the public
- Any decision made is appealable to the Board of Permit Appeals and the Department of Health interacts with the applicant throughout the Maher process
- Work stoppage would only happen regarding the Maher process, but all other work could continue. Only work that would disturb soil would come under the Maher process
- Planning would notify an applicant if their project falls under the Maher Act
- DPH is committed to make this process as expeditious and predictable as possible
- DPH will have a part time staff person on hand at 1660 Mission Street for the first three months to aid in this process until the PTS system is up and running
- Explanation of DPH Review: Site History, Work Plan and Prep site for mitigation - total 90 days, but site could be compliant without having to go through all three reviews
- 2012 Case Load for projects under the Maher Act and other projects were 56 cases
- Currently there is .5 staff person handling this process
- If expanded there are 1.5 staff persons that could be moved to the expanded Maher Program
- Applicants in the Maher area pay a fee when submitting their application and that fee pays for the review of the documents
- DPH is committed to working closely to make sure that review of the Maher related projects is appropriately staffed.

President McCarthy thanked Ms. Pretzer for answering the Commission's questions from the last meeting. President McCarthy asked how much the fee mentioned was going to be. Ms. Pretzer said that the initial fee is \$600 and then there is an additional fee of \$200 per hour for document process. Ms. Cushing from the Department of Environmental Health said that most of the jobs come out to be around \$3,000.

Commissioner Melgar said that she was not worried about the large projects because those people can usually afford the costs, but said that this might hurt the smaller contractors or homeowners. Commissioner Melgar stated that she was concerned about the amount of time it takes to hire inspectors if there was an abundance of work and what would be the criteria in an emergency; could someone hire a private inspector and have the Health Department approve repairs. Ms. Pretzer said that if DPH did not have inspectors DBI staff could inspect and that would result in the quickest turnaround time. Ms. Pretzer said that in terms of site history DPH was hoping to put together a list of consultants that have done this type of work and provide that for the public's consideration.

Ms. Sarah Jones, Acting Environmental Review Officer explained that there are large projects that have to go through a higher level of environmental impact CEQA review because of the soil conditions and these represent a substantial increase in the time and cost of a building permit, but said that is only about ten projects per year and smaller projects under the ordinance would not be subject to this stiffer review. Ms. Jones stated that under CEQA if there is a review the entire project is on hold, but that would not be the case for the smaller projects.

Commissioner Melgar asked about delays when there is an emergency to fix a homeowner's sewer

drain. Ms. Jones said that this would not be a public agency action and the process should not be delayed.

President McCarthy said that it was important that the Commissioners understand this very important legislation and what needs to be done for implementation in San Francisco. President McCarthy stated that the BIC wants to be cognizant of the fact that when this is implemented it is done in a constructive manner and that the inspectors dealing with this can cope with it. President McCarthy said that his biggest concern is the smaller person who would not normally be involved in this situation and that they could get the help they need to get their job done when this does happen. President McCarthy said that he was happy that there was an exemption because he believes that the Department is going to see a lot of them. President McCarthy asked if a new map would be available to the public as soon as the ordinance is in place. Mr. Paul Maltzer of Planning said that the map is ready to be available to the public as soon as the ordinance is in place. President McCarthy asked if the map would be shown in block and lot format and was assured by Mr. Maltzer that it would. Mr. Maltzer stated that the map would be a live data base with changes being updated regularly.

Commissioner Melgar asked if there was going to be a data base with all of this information so that a future owner would not have to go through this process all over again. Ms. Cushing said that there is no data base of these projects, but said that all documents are scanned so when people do the first site history they are welcome to contact the City and a disk is burned for their consultants and that is how a site history is started. Mr. Maltzer said that in the Planning Department the data base in the future would reflect that a site had gone through a Maher process and the underlying soils analysis would be in the Health Department.

Commissioner Walker asked if the existing land owner would receive a notice that they have been put on this map or would it be triggered when somebody applies for a removal of soil. Commissioner Walker also asked about the timeliness of cross training and working with unions to make sure that the staffing has been approved, and that staff is trained to deal with soil and hazardous materials.

Ms. Pretzer stated that she would talk to DPH to ensure that triggers or advance work is in place to have the type of flexibility that was discussed.

President McCarthy called for public comment and there was none.

Secretary Harris called a roll call vote:

President McCarthy	YES
Vice-President Mar	NO
Commissioner Clinch	YES
Commissioner Lee	YES
Commissioner McCray	YES
Commissioner Melgar	YES
Commissioner Walker	YES

The motion carried with a vote of 6 to 1.

RESOLUTION NO. BIC 028-13

4. Update on Community Action Program for Seismic Safety (CAPSS) Earthquake Safety Implementation Program (ESIP).

Acting Director Tom Hui stated that he appointed engineer Robert Chun as Manager of the Soft Story program, and he has also assigned two additional engineers to assist Mr. Chun, along with a college intern to do the spreadsheets and notification forms. Mr. Chun has worked for the City for 24 years and with the Department of Building Inspection for more than 14 years, and is very knowledgeable regarding seismic safety. Mr. Chun has also been working closely with Safety Director Patrick Otellini, and they have weekly meetings regarding seismic safety. Mr. Hui said that the Department is aware that this is an important issue that will affect a lot of buildings, so this is only the beginning and later more staff will be assigned to this program. Mr. Hui introduced and congratulated Robert Chun.

Mr. Robert Chun thanked Director Hui and said he wanted to share the story of how he became the Manager of the Soft Story program. Mr. Chun said that about two weeks ago Acting Director Hui asked him to go to lunch and told him that he wanted him to work on the Soft Story program, and said it was not a lot of work. Mr. Chun jokingly stated that is not true, and Mr. Hui said he could do the job part-time in addition to all the work he has and that is not true. Mr. Chun said what convinced him is Mr. Hui said he would never have to appear before the Building Inspection Commission, and quipped that he actually paid for lunch too.

Mr. Chun gave a brief presentation regarding the Soft Story program.

- Within 90 days staff will send out notifications to the owners of potential soft story buildings: There is a list of over 6,100 buildings.
- Owners will receive a letter if the building was constructed before 1978, has 5 units or more, has 3 stories or more, or has 2 stories over a basement.
- Along with the notifications, screening forms will go out for an engineer or architect to fill out and return within 1 year.
- Depending on how the form is filled out owners will be placed in 1 of 4 tiers:
 - **Tier 1** - Owner has an assembly occupancy on any of the stories, drawings are to be submitted within 2 years and complete the construction within 4 years.
 - **Tier 2** - For larger buildings, (more than 15 units), owners will have a little more time.
 - **Tier 3** - If owner does not belong in Tier 1, 2, or 4.
 - **Tier 4** - If owner has a building occupancy on the first floor and is in a liquefaction area then they will have 4 years to submit drawings, and 7 years to complete the work.
- There will be an online database of all the buildings that can be looked up by block and lot number or by address, along with a column on the status.(e.g. returned form, in the program, submitted drawings, or started construction)
- Robert Chun and Patrick Otellini have been meeting once a week. They only want to limit the work to soft story retrofit. For example, they do not want someone to “piggy back” a tenant improvement project on the second floor.
- AB-094 is still in effect, so if owner has a building with 4 residential units then they can

still take advantage of AB-094.

- There is a training schedule for DBI's in-house staff, and on July 10th staff will be trained on FEMA p807. Acting Director Hui wants to train the outside engineers as well.
- Two more clerks will be hired for this program and interviews will be taking place next Wednesday.
- On the average Mr. Chun has been getting about 5 phone calls and emails per day from homeowners, and 1 was from China. – A woman owns a building on Balboa Street and wants to sell the building, so he explained the ordinance and she is not waiting for the notification but has already engaged an engineer and wants to start the process.

Commissioner's & Staff Question & Answer Discussion:

- Commissioner McCray asked for clarification on the 2nd floor rehab example. Mr. Chun said staff wants the work related to the soft story work, and not a tag on for example of a 2nd floor restaurant then the owner has to worry about sprinklers and so on, so that is why the work should be limited to the retrofit work.
- Commissioner Walker asked if Mr. Chun could email the Tier Specification Sheet, so the Commissioners could have it in writing.
- Commissioner Walker said she is concerned about the issue of how this work is going to affect folks in the buildings, so that tenants or businesses are not displaced. She also asked if funding has been identified to help building owners to do the work without negatively affecting their bottom line or the tenants'. Has DBI contacted tenant organizations that are on board to help with logistical displacement issues?
- Mr. Patrick Otellini, ESIP Program Director, congratulated Mr. Chun and stated that he is a great engineer and a problem solver thus a good choice as Manager.
- Regarding tenant issues he would like to direct the Commissioners to their website, www.sfcapss.org/softstory. This website was created to deal with all the circumstances/issues around the ordinance with financing, landlord concerns, tenants rights, etc. which is a great resource to the whole community.
- Mr. Otellini and Director Hui plan to do community outreach by doing a joint presentation by district to speak to the community probably 1 - 2 nights a week.
- Mr. Otellini said he spent time in different communities talking to bankers and homeowners, but he thinks they will see a big ramp up when the notices go out. They want work limited to the ground floor to avoid the additional kind of work that would cause tenant displacement. Currently tenants will be able to remain in their home when the work is happening.
- ESIP plans to hold a financing workshop in the fall to show case the City's own financial program, as well as invite approximately 15-20 private banks to give their products. Any building owner would have the opportunity to talk to several different lenders about different financing options.
- Commissioner Walker asked if there is an automatic inferred pass through to the tenant of this cost?
- Mr. Otellini said it is not automatic, but the current rent ordinance allows for a 100% pass through to the tenant amortized for 100 years. Current arrangement with the tenant community would be to streamline the hardship process for all capital improvements, not just soft story.

- Commissioner Lee asked when the property owners are supposed to reply to the Department?
- Mr. Otellini said they have to respond within one year after notification was given.
- Vice-President Mar asked of the 6,100 properties on the website are they identified?
- Mr. Otellini said the list was created in conjunction with his staff, but different databases are involved so there are a few spot checks to cover. The list should be coordinated around the time the notices are sent out.
- President McCarthy thanked Mr. Chun for taking on this job and said it is important to save these buildings and make sure they are around a long time.

Secretary Harris called for public comment and there was none.

6. Discussion and possible action to approve and swear in a member of the Board of Examiners Licensed Architect Seat. Appointments recommended by the Nominations Subcommittee are: Bradley Sugarman and Toby Engelberg. Seat to expire September 15, 2016. Additional eligible applicants reviewed by the Nominations Subcommittee that the BIC also may consider include: David McDermott, Azemina Favretto, Ron Giddings, Alexander Lirisman, Brian Foust, and George Wesely.

President McCarthy asked for clarification of the names read, and Secretary Harris explained that the Nominations Sub-Committee recommended two candidates: Bradley Sugarman and Toby Engelberg, however the other names read were of people who applied but were not recommended.

Vice-President Mar said that the Nominations Sub-Committee wanted to recommend Bradley Sugarman for the Licensed Architect Seat and he thanked everyone who applied given the short notification period.

Vice-President Mar made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to appoint Bradley Sugarman to the Licensed Architect Seat.

Secretary Harris called for public comment and there was none.

Secretary Harris called a roll call vote:

President McCarthy	YES
Vice-President Mar	YES
Commissioner Clinch	YES
Commissioner Lee	YES
Commissioner McCray	YES
Commissioner Melgar	YES
Commissioner Walker	YES

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner McCray asked if Mr. Sugarman would be sworn in, and Secretary Harris said that he was on vacation. Commissioner McCray asked if Mr. Sugarman could come in to meet the full Commission, and President McCarthy concurred that it would be good to have him present at the

next meeting to be sworn in.

RESOLUTION NO. BIC 029-13

7. Discussion and possible action to approve and swear in a member of the Code Advisory Committee Commercial Property Owner/Manager Seat. Appointment recommended by the Nominations Sub-Committee is: Henry Karnilowicz. Seat to expire August 18, 2016. Additional eligible applicants reviewed by the Nominations Subcommittee that the BIC also may consider include: Jacqueline Mohanna, Roozbeh Falahati, and Mark Lawin.

Commissioner Lee stated that the Nominations Sub-Committee selected a few people to interview and decided to recommend Henry Karnilowicz for the Commercial Property Owner Seat.

Commissioner Lee made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Melgar, to appoint Henry Karnilowicz to the Commercial Property Owner/Manager Seat.

Secretary Harris called a roll call vote:

President McCarthy	YES
Vice-President Mar	YES
Commissioner Clinch	YES
Commissioner Lee	YES
Commissioner McCray	YES
Commissioner Melgar	YES
Commissioner Walker	YES

The motion carried unanimously.

President McCarthy congratulated Mr. Karnilowicz and asked him to approach the podium so that he could be sworn in.

Mr. Karnilowicz thanked the Commissioners and said that he really appreciated being appointed to the committee. Mr. Karnilowicz said that he enjoys participating in Codes and service, particularly now that there is the 2013 Code that is going into effect in 2014, so he is looking forward to being in the middle of everything.

President McCarthy asked Mr. Karnilowicz to raise his right hand to be sworn in, and he read the following Oath of Office:

“I, Henry Karnilowicz, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the constitution of the State of California against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and the constitution of the State of California; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties upon which I am about to enter and during such time as I hold the office of a member of the Code Advisory Committee Commercial Property Owner/Manager Seat.”

RESOLUTION NO. BIC 030-13

8. Director's Report.

a. Update on DBI's finances.

Deputy Director of Administrative Services, Pamela Levin, gave an update on DBI's finances and discussed the following points:

- DBI is projecting that FY2012-13 will close with a \$23.73M balance compared to the budget.
- A portion of the balance, between \$3 - \$5M, will be transferred to the deferred credit program at the end of the fiscal year.
- In terms of revenues, 2013 was 21 percent higher than year-to-date for May 2012.
- Services continue to exceed the budget, and currently DBI is at \$16.2M over its budget and expect by the end of the year to increase to \$21.4M.
- In terms of expenditures, when looking at the year over year comparison, the year-to-date for May 2013 is 2.34% less than May for 2012.
- The greatest category in savings is employee salaries. The Department has hired 20 positions, including 2 clerks by promotion.
- The Budget & Finance Committee heard DBI's budget on Monday, and Acting Director Hui gave a very good and brief presentation. The Department did not get affected by the budget analyst as was done in previous years, and staff accepted their recommendations.
- There were no cuts in positions and the Department still has a reserve put aside for T.I. improvements. The \$17M that was put aside in the fund balance for stabilization reserve is set.
- \$15M was appropriated from the fund balance into the capital reserve for facility related projects. DBI is doing a facility master plan, to look out for several years to see how to house the staff.
- DBI has done a lot of hiring and Housing Inspector interviews are being held tomorrow. Clerks were also interviewed and there are some part-time positions to help start the mandatory soft story program.

Vice-President Mar said the Commission was happy to get back some of the retirees to fill in some of the vacancies, but asked when the Department might be able to get the permanent positions.

Ms. Levin stated there are some Prop F people working in Housing, and as soon as the interviews are done people will be hired and the division will be staffed up. The advantage is that they come with so much knowledge that they can train some of the new individuals which is why some of them will be kept.

Acting Director Hui said that staff has to basically beg some of the Prop F people to come back, because they want to get back to their normal lives. There is only one Chinese speaking Housing Inspector and in Plan Review Jeff Ma and Y.Y. Chiu are working for a few more months. Vice President Mar mentioned that it is good that retirees are helping, but it is important that they are up to date on the current Code changes. Mr. Hui said Mr. Ma & Mr. Chiu are only doing pre-application reviews but they are up to date on the Codes.

President’s Announcements. (Part 1)

Acknowledgement of Senior Electrical Inspector David Green.

President McCarthy read the following statement:

“Special Thanks and Congratulations to Senior Electrical Inspector David Green who, after more than 25 years of outstanding service, is retiring effective June 29th. David began his City service career in November 1987 as an electrician with DTIS, transferred to DPW in July 1988, and landed at DBI in July 1995. David is renowned as Mr. Solar for his expertise in the still emerging green energy field; and has served as the principal electrical inspector for many large projects. We thank David for his invaluable contributions for more than a quarter century, and we wish him every continuing success in his well-earned retirement.”

President McCarthy said that the Commission had an acknowledgement for Mr. Green and asked him to come to the podium, and the audience applauded. President McCarthy presented the Building Inspection Commission Certificate of Appreciation, and Mr. Strawn presented the Department of Building Inspection Certificate of Appreciation.

Senior Electrical Inspector David Green thanked the Commissioners for this honor and gave the following speech: “Mr. Green said that the day he became an Electrical Inspector was a lovely day for him, and it has been a tremendous career. He has been involved in almost every major civic and large project over the last 20 years, including the library and City Hall. The day before yesterday he was at the bottom of the Trans Bay Terminal looking at grounding and all the five foot diameter bracing pipes, which was absolutely fantastic. He had the privilege of going into countless private residences from beautiful mansions in Pacific Heights down to the bungalows in the Bay View. It has been wonderful and he thanked the Commission again.”

Secretary Harris and the Commissioners thanked Mr. Green.

b. Update on proposed legislation.

Mr. Bill Strawn of Legislative and Public Affairs gave an update on proposed legislation and addressed following points:

- **Newly-proposed ordinance to control construction equipment emissions** – This ordinance was proposed by the Department of Public Health and would amend the Building Code and Administrative Code to require contractors to develop and post publicly a ‘construction emissions minimization plan’, as well as to provide quarterly reports.
- **Newly-proposed ordinance to provide alternate water sources for non-potable applications** – The SFPUC has asked DBI to review this draft ordinance and provide comment prior to introduction. It would amend the Health Code and the Business and Tax Regulations Code to establish permitting requirements for two or more parcels that might share the use of alternate water sources for non-potable applications, and also would set annual and permit fees. Chief Plumbing Inspector Steve Panelli is reviewing the draft and working with the SFPUC on this draft.
- **Ordinance No. 130119 – Mandatory Seismic Retrofitting of Soft Story buildings.**
STATUS: Plan Review Supervisor Robert Chun, an engineer, is heading DBI’s Implementation Program, and working with Technical Services to finalize the Screening Document and notification letter.

- **121018 – Ordinance amending Housing Code to require Grab Bars** in hotel common-use water closets and bathing facilities, and requiring a usable telephone jack/wiring in all units.
- **Ordinance No. 130284 – Fee Waiver during May 2013** – Supervisor Katy Tang encouraged small business owners to replace awnings and pedestrian-level lighting during May 2013's observance of Small Business Month, as well as in support of Building Safety Month. There were three permits issued, but there was not a lot of community outreach.
- **Fee Deferral Program** – The Planning Department recently ended the fee deferral program.

Commissioner's & Staff Question & Answer Discussion:

- Commissioner McCray asked how many awnings were eligible? Mr. Strawn said he did not know but would get back to the Commission with a response.
- Commissioner Melgar asked what Mr. Strawn knew about the SFPUC proposal? From what he understood from Mr. Panelli (he is unclear how it would be implemented), but DBI Plumbing permit/inspection would be assisting the PUC and at minimum a little more meet and confer with SFPUC staff is needed.
- Mr. Hui said the PUC sent the draft to DBI for comment, but it may conflict with the Building Code so he asked Chief Panelli to look into it as it would be a major issue if the two codes are in conflict.
- Commissioner Walker said the legislation stalls permits and the Inspectors had valid concerns, so she encourages DBI staff to work with the PUC.
- Vice-President Mar said perhaps a member of the BOS could work with Chief Panelli to help craft the legislation to make it easier for homeowners.

c. Update on Permit Tracking System.

Hema Nekkanti, IS Project Director, gave an update on the Permit Tracking System and addressed the following points:

- Staff has continued to plan for Round Two User Acceptance Testing which is substantial. There is a lot of coordination that is occurring and almost all of the functional groups within DBI are represented during Round Two.
- They are tested within a span of three weeks and staff is planning logistics around that. All areas are going to be tested.
- Staff is making progress with configuration and automation components and requirements, and the big one is fees so they are being tested as we go along.
- President McCarthy asked where does DBI stand with the coalition with the Planning Department and DPW? Ms. Nekkanti said DBI is continuing to work with other departments, including Fire, and are including different scenarios that will cross departments.
- Commissioner Walker asked if the Assessor's Office was included? Answer: No, only for viewing.
- Commissioner McCray asked how many mobile devices the Department has and how was the evaluation process going? Answer: 55 Samsung 3 devices were ordered, but not as flexible so new ones will arrive shortly.

- New devices are going to be used for mobile inspections instead of the heavy ones that were almost impossible to work with.
- Commissioner Lee asked when the Commission could get a demonstration of the devices work? Answer: This could be done anytime because the Inspectors who are using these devices for recording and results in the field say they are helpful. There about 20 now with the current system and Inspectors can show that soon.
- President McCarthy clarified that the Commissioners are asking that staff bring in the device and walk them through it. Ms. Nekkanti briefly explained how the devices function and said that she was comfortable with doing a presentation at the next meeting.

d. Update on major projects.

Acting Director Hui gave an update on the major projects and discussed the following items:

- There are roughly 35 tower cranes in the City right now.
- There is a boom in projects.
- Some people are still trying to submit site permits for the fee deferral program.
- Construction has increased in San Francisco, so it is good that DBI hired more staff or there would be trouble getting all of the permits out.
- Small and large projects are being submitted, and the rental market is so expensive now which is why there needs to be more affordable housing projects done.

Commissioner Walker stated that she was on Market Street the other day and every block had a major project in process, and those have been approved over the last ten years. DBI and the BIC anticipated this boom, and really pushed to hire more staff for these very key plan checks. It is good to anticipate a slowdown in the future as well, so staff has to be mindful.

Further Commissioner & Staff Comments were as follows:

- DBI needs to be very strategic and have a plan for the future.
- In a category of 1 – 5 the Department is probably in the top 3 doing more construction in the country.
- Since the Department is planning for the future that is why there is money in the reserve in case there is a downturn.
- More Inspectors have been hired to help with the Condominium Conversion Ordinance.
- Acting Director Hui said he hopes that there is enough staff available, and he does not want staff to have to worry about pink slips.
- Soft Story, Condo conversion, and Tenant Improvement projects require different expertise.
- All items should be considered in terms of the budget.

Secretary Harris called for public comment on items 8 a-d and there was none.

**9. Discussion on electrification of DBI's vehicle fleet
(Continued from the BIC hearing of May 15, 2013)**

Deputy Director of Administrative Services, Pamela Levin, gave a presentation on electrification of DBI's vehicle fleet and discussed the following points:

Assumptions Used in Budget Request Updates

- City fleet contracts will be used
- Sedans will be replaced by plug in hybrid sedans and trucks by CNG trucks
- Two cars can be charged per charging station
- A location will be found such as the 1660 Mission Garage to locate electric cars and chargers

Budget Passed Out By the & Finance Committee

- **FY 2013-14 Budget**
 - Replace 10 vehicles (with 8 hybrid plug in cars and 2 CNG trucks)
 - Buy 25 hybrid plug in cars
 - Total cost - \$1,987,000
 - \$1,345,000 vehicles
 - \$642,000 infrastructure (\$400,000 electrification, \$242,000 charging stations)
- **FY 2014-15 Budget**
 - Replace 10 vehicles (with 6 hybrid plug In cars, 4 CNG trucks)
 - Total cost – 370,000

Total Number of Vehicles

Replacement/New	Type	#FY 2013-14	#FY 2014-15
Replacement	Hybrid Plug In – Cars	8	6
Replacement	CNG - Trucks	2	4
Total Replacement		10	10
New	Nissan Leaf S	3	0
New	Prius EV	11	0
New	Ford C-MAX	11	0
Total New		25	0
Grand Total		35	10

Commissioner’s & Staff Discussion:

- Commissioner Clinch asked if all of the vehicles were hybrid, and not all electric? Ms. Levin said yes they were all hybrids.
- Commissioner Melgar thanked Ms. Levin for her due diligence and hard work on this report. She wished there was better coordination with the Department of the Environment, because other departments do not have a need for large fleets.
- Ms. Levin said the Mayor’s Office is in support of DBI.
- Commissioner McCray asked if rental space was needed for parking. Ms. Levin said yes DBI budgeted for spaces, but she does not have the cost right now.
- Ms. Levin said that it is a challenge to find rental spaces for DBI’s fleet, as this is the only department staffing up with cars.

- President McCarthy asked Ms. Levin to follow up at a later meeting, and report where DBI stands regarding its fleet in comparison with other cities.

10. Discussion on work flow at DBI including fifth floor operations, and staff assignments of large projects vs. over-the-counter projects.

(Continued from the BIC hearing of May 15, 2013)

Deputy Director of Permit Services, Edward Sweeney, gave a presentation on the work flow at DBI including fifth floor operations, and staff assignments of large projects vs. over-the-counter projects and addressed the following items:

- Smaller jobs such as replacement of windows, some dry rot repairs and even kitchens and baths without plans get approved over the counter and can be processed within 30 minutes.
- The time that a customer arrives can determine how long it takes to get an over-the-counter permit; early morning is best, lunch time can be difficult as staff are taking lunch and some customers also try to get the permit on their lunch break; afternoon is the busiest time.
- Customers with plans for small additions or small alterations go the fifth floor to what is called “intake”. Intake reviews the plans, verifies information and if there are any corrections to be made, allows the customer to make those corrections and then the plan is issued.
- Large projects can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months depending on the size of the job.
- In May 2013 \$1.5 Billion was approved for permits, most were for large jobs with plans.
- Plan checkers time at the counter is done on a rotating basis with everyone working approximately 3 half days per week; some weeks a plan checker will be exempt if they are working on a large project.
- During the summer months approximately 140 customers go through plan check each day; this will slow down in October.
- There are two or three engineers that work on the high rise buildings and one or two younger ones that are being trained.
- Two building inspectors do the architectural design for high rises or large projects and it would be helpful to have one or two more building inspectors doing the architectural plan check.
- DBI is going to provide plans for items such as a set of stairs or a one story deck. This would save DBI and the customer both time and money.
- Two Engineers, Eric Gee and Benjamin Liu are in their sophomore year of college at USC and San Jose and are helping the Department with the plans that DBI will be offering.
- There are some 230 projects that are currently being review which is a two to three week backlog.
- 24 permits out of 230 are taking longer than three or four weeks.
- Business is picking up at this time of year and the Department is looking forward to the challenge of increasing efficiency.

Commissioner Walker asked what the criteria was for whether something is accepted over the counter or whether it has to be submitted. Deputy Director Sweeney said that the review cannot take more than one hour plan check on each station. Commissioner Walker asked what happened

if the review went over the one hour and if it was based on a dollar amount. Mr. Sweeney said that the sole criteria is if it only takes one hour and said that most designers and applicants know how long it is going to take and that an inspector will look at the plans and see if the criteria can be met. Commissioner Walker said that the process sounds kind of arbitrary to her.

Commissioner Walker asked if a customer can request a specific plan checker as this was one thing that the Q-Matic system was supposed to fix. Mr. Sweeney said that the Department uses a wheel system where the customer signs in and then when a plan checker is finished with a customer he/she takes the next person on the list. Commissioner Walker asked if anyone could call in for a particular plan checker. Mr. Sweeney answered no. Mr. Sweeney said that people who come to the Department often know what they are doing and sometimes they have to sign in to more than one list; they stand in the middle of the room and listen for their number to be called. Mr. Sweeney said that if they are subsequently called to another station without finishing with one they are considered non-responsive and if that happens twice they are crossed off of that list and must start over in that station.

Commissioner Melgar asked if the wheel system is made public so that a customer could know what plan checker was going to be at a certain desk at a particular time. Mr. Sweeney said that they could, but said that there is no guarantee that they would get the plan checker they wanted as the assignments are made two weeks in advance by one person.

Vice-President Mar stated that at a future meeting he would like some of this explained in writing regarding the wheel system and the size of the projects. Vice-President Mar said that he was particularly please that the Department is working on such things as the stair plans and said that he wanted to encourage DBI to move forward with simple plans for things such as replacement of doors, windows and things that would benefit the homeowner or very small remodel projects.

Vice-President Mar said that he would agree with Commissioner Walker that this system is very arbitrary and said that he has been on the fifth floor when expeditors come in with rolls of plans and want to have it done right away. Vice-President Mar stated that he would like a more professional standard along the lines of scope of work or square footage. Vice-President Mar said that DBI gets pressure from customers when many times delays are due to Planning or some other City Department. Vice-President Mar said that he thought DBI was doing a good job, but said that at the end of the day it is the Building Department that customers feel is responsible for all delays in permits whether it is true or not. Deputy Director Sweeney said that it is called a building permit and at the end of the process the Building Department collects the money.

Deputy Director Sweeney said that he would like to follow up on Vice-President Mar's comments about people with large rolls of plans and said that often times those people are just ready for a recheck; they have gotten their comments and have done the corrections and just need to resubmit. Mr. Sweeney said that sometimes the person coming in with just one or two pieces of paper take a lot more time than the professional with a large roll of plans. Acting Director Tom Hui stated that many of the customers coming in with a large number of plans are coming in for a simple or tenant improvement job. Mr. Hui said that with tenant improvement projects the customer pays the architect by the page so in order to make more money the plans are very detailed. Mr. Hui said that sometimes one or two pages is more complicated than the big roll of plans because the big roll is usually done by a professional. Mr. Hui said that to make things more efficient the Department

is cross training plan checkers, inspectors and engineers and said that management reminds plan checkers on a weekly basis about improving the backlog and getting permits out. Mr. Hui said that plan checkers are assigned depending on their work load and said that he, the Supervisor and the Deputy Director work to balance the workload giving all plan checkers experience on all kinds and sizes of projects.

Commissioner Walker said that it still seemed like the determination for the one hour was a judgment call. Acting Director Hui said that plan checkers are aware within a few minutes as to how long it is going to take to review plans and that generally most of the customers are very familiar with the time constraints as well.

Vice-President Mar stated that he thought it would be a good idea to get data on which jobs are going over the counter, the cost and the scope of work because the one hour rule is still very subjective.

Commissioner Clinch said that he must have missed something because he did not see that anything was broken. Commissioner Clinch said that everything seems to be working fine and said he wondered why this discussion was even being held. President McCarthy said that it was just an update so the Commissioners understand the process. President McCarthy stated that he personally thought that things were going well.

Deputy Director Sweeney said that the plan checkers are human beings and proceeded to show an overhead chart showing the production of different plan checkers as some people do large jobs and it would appear that their dollar amount is huge just because of the size of the job. Mr. Sweeney stated that he regularly meets with staff to ask them what they like to work on and how management can improve their working conditions to keep productivity up.

Commissioner Melgar said that there have been accusations made in the newspapers about lack of transparency in the Department particularly by one member of the Board of Supervisors. Commissioner Melgar said that it would be good for the Department to put things in writing and to share the methodology of the processes with the public during these public hearings. Commissioner Melgar stated that this would go a long way toward letting the public know how things are actually done because there is a perception that expeditors have some kind of angle that other customers do not. Mr. Sweeney said that these expeditors are in the Department everyday so they know the procedures. Commissioner Walker stated that there needs to be a way to get that information out and have everyone know that each person is being treated in the same manner and that there is no favoritism.

Vice-President Mar stated that he especially wanted to help the smaller builder or homeowner so that it is easy for people to pull permits; it is important for people to pull permits, pay for permits and do things the right way. Vice-President Mar said that this was where those stair and deck plans would be helpful as a regular homeowner would not need an expeditor, but could rely on a general contractor. Vice-President Mar said that maybe the public's perception is wrong, but said that it is the BIC and DBI's job to educate the people and to make things as simple as possible for the smaller projects. Acting Director Hui said that the Department is more than willing to help homeowners and smaller builders and said that the Department extended the hours to 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

President McCarthy said that he thought this was a good discussion and said now the Department has direction to start monitoring how things are done. President McCarthy stated that the Department is going in the right direction for the smaller and bigger developers and said that the smaller developer should be able to go into DBI and have a stress free process to get a permit and in turn there will be less work done without a permit.

Commissioner McCray said that he appreciated the report given and asked that there be a quarterly report to know how things are progressing and to know what the backlog is. Deputy Director Sweeney said that it is important to realize that the 5th floor operation has only been in existence for 2 ½ years and is evolving all the time.

There was no public comment.

3. General Public Comment: The BIC will take public comment on matters within the Commission's jurisdiction that are not part of this agenda.

There was no public comment.

2. President's Announcements. (Part 2)

President McCarthy read the following announcements:

- Congratulations and thanks to DBI staffers of Plan Review Services who received letters of appreciation: **Rudy Pada, Reynaldo Ortega, Tara Bazile, Jimmy Cheung, and Tom Le.** I would like to thank them for their outstanding customer service.
- Congratulations and thanks to Building Inspector **Nancy Curvino** for her professionalism and outstanding customer assistance to a homeowner. Well done, Nancy!
- Thanks to Building Inspector **Tam Chiu** and Housing Inspector **Dan Shiu** for staffing the DBI booth at last Friday's **Chinatown Safety Festival**. Held in Portsmouth Square, Tam Chiu also gave a workshop on the new State law requiring the installation of carbon monoxide detection alarms to prevent injuries and deaths from this 'invisible killer' that results in roughly 500 deaths annually in the United States.
- Congratulations to BIC Commissioners **Frank Lee and Kevin Clinch**, who were sworn in again by Mayor Lee during a City Hall ceremony last week.
- Congratulations to Acting Director **Tom Hui**, whose article explaining DBI's implementation program for the newly effective mandatory soft story retrofitting program will be in the **July issue** of *San Francisco Apartment Magazine*. This is part of DBI's ongoing community outreach to inform property owners about this new ordinance, and provides step-by-step navigation of how implementation will occur and thus make the City better prepared for the next Big One.

Commissioner McCray made a motion, seconded by President McCarthy, that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. BIC 031-13

13. Adjournment.

Commissioner Walker made a motion, seconded by Vice-President Mar, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously.


RESOLUTION NO. BIC 032-13

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



**Ann Aherne
Commission Secretary (Retired)**



**Sonya Harris
Commission Secretary**

SUMMARY OF REQUESTS BY COMMISSIONERS OR FOLLOW UP ITEMS	
Demonstration of hand held devices. – Commissioner Lee	Page 11
Report on DBI’s status regarding its fleet in comparison to other cities. – President McCarthy	Page 13
Written explanation of “wheel system” on 5 th floor to be made public in the near future. – Vice-President Mar, Commissioners Melgar & Walker	Pages 14 & 15
Quarterly report on activity on 5 th floor. – Commissioner McCray	Page 16

- Acting Director Hui has named Chief Building Inspector **Patrick O’Riordan** to head a Cross-Training Team that is helping newly-hired DBI inspectors understand the often complex issues involved in permit and process review. Patrick is being assisted by Chief Building Inspectors **Ron Tom and Tony Grieco**.
- Congratulations and thanks to the DBI Finance Team on its excellent work with next year’s budget. The Department had its first Board Budget and Finance Committee this past Monday with the Budget Analyst recommending very minor reductions. Our final hearing and the Committee’s vote on DBI’s budget will be next Monday, June 24th, and with the local building and construction economy continuing to boom, we are currently in sound fiscal shape.
- **Employee of the Quarter for Quarter Two** – Just a reminder that in early June all DBI staff are asked to **submit NOW their nomination of a colleague performing outstanding work for our Quarter Two 2013 Employee of the Quarter Award**. Nominations are open –so please email yours to Bill Strawn as soon as possible.

There was no public comment.

11. Commissioner’s Questions and Matters.

a. Inquiries to Staff. At this time, Commissioners may make inquiries to staff regarding various documents, policies, practices, and procedures, which are of interest to the Commission.

There were no inquiries to staff.

b. Future Meetings/Agendas. At this time, the Commission may discuss and take action to set the date of a Special Meeting and/or determine those items that could be placed on the agenda of the next meeting and other future meetings of the Building Inspection Commission.

The Commissioners had a discussion about the regular meeting to be held on July 17th as there was previous discussion about canceling the meeting due to Commissioner’s vacations. The Commissioners concerns about canceling a meeting were regarding the ongoing search for a permanent Director for DBI. It was decided that Secretary Harris once again poll the Commissioners as to their availability and then to do the proper notification as to cancellation or to send out the agenda. It was decided that if needed, special closed session meetings could be scheduled depending on Commissioner’s availability.

There was no public comment.

12. Review and approval of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 17, 2013.

There was no public comment.