



PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING NOTES

**Thursday, August 16, 2012
2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

**1660 Mission Street
2nd Floor, Room 2001**

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

William Strawn welcomed everyone to the meeting for Acting Director Tom Hui who arrived shortly thereafter.

2. MISCELLANEOUS PLANNING ISSUES

a. Planning Fee Calculation for Permits

Jackie Crivinar with BCCI said she asked this topic be placed on the agenda because occasionally their projects are tenant improvements involving minor work which can be very costly. Jonas Lonin said that permits have to be split in order to avoid the total valuation of the project and minimize fees. Currently there is no way for Planning to separate fees but was open to bringing the issue up with the Planning Director.

b. Discussion of Criteria for Historic Preservation Review

Jonas Lonin explained that the California CEQA categorizes any building fifty years or greater as a potential resource and therefore the preservation team is required to evaluate it under a checklist to make a determination. The process is lengthy (mainly due to staff limitations) but after the first review is made on whether a building is a resource or not, it will not be necessary to repeat the process for future modifications and will be entered in their database as follows:

Category A = Known Historical Resource
Category B = Potential Historical Resource
Category C = Not a Historical Resource

It was asked if Planning could adapt the process specifically for San Francisco to simplify matters to which Jonas said he would confer with Tim Fry of the Preservation Team.

The subject of eliminating the Planning Department's station from the 5th floor was introduced. Mr. Lonin said the volume of work brought to this station is minimal and the possibility of consolidating the Planning stations to be on one floor instead of on the 1st and 5th floors could prove to be efficacious because providing employee coverage on both floors is difficult for Planning. Planners will be available to sign-off on permits and core planners who are very knowledgeable of the codes are able to answer

questions. Jonas said an established policy set by DBI limited their planner on the 5th floor from answering general information questions to the public restricting them to only plan review.

Acting Deputy Director Ed Sweeney of Permit Services said that currently, persons providing coverage for Planning's 5th floor station already answers and deals with the public's questions. Moreover, the layout of designated work stations was designed to meet the needs of individual departments per the BPR. DBI is currently working on providing two additional stations on the 5th floor to accommodate cashiers for the new cash management making Planning's request difficult because of limited space issues.

Acting Director Tom Hui proposed that this matter be continued for further discussion in a future meeting.

3. UPDATE ON LEGISLATION AFFECTING DBI

William Strawn said that he could provide legislative update report to interested parties, i.e., adding water filling station for commercial buildings, disability access or conformation notification for small business leases in commercial building.

4. UPDATE ON PERMIT & PROJECT TRACKING SYSTEM

Acting Director Hui reported that updates on this matter will be provided when Vivian Day and Penny Venable return from the PTS seminar in San Diego. To date, the new system is on time and still planned for completion for November 2013.

5. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Acting Director Hui announced that beginning August 27th, DBI will open from 7:30am to 5:00pm with limited service between 7:30am to 8:00am mainly to help expedite homeowners obtain permits without plan review. These hours will also accommodate employees commuting from other cities who arrive to work very early.

Ken and Jackie with BCCI revisited the subject of Planning Department stations and wanted it noted that they are in favor of the current configuration of the 5th floor. Acting Director Hui, agreed that he does not see a problem with the existing system.

Mel Murphy said that the public's perception of changes taking place at DBI is very positive right now and in so keeping did not think this change was a good idea.

a. Suggestion of Employee Recognition System

Acting Director Hui announced that he would like to bring back a system that recognizes employees for their hard work. Pamela Levin said that they have been in discussion with other departments on how they acknowledge their employees some suggestions were cash bonuses, gift certificates, photo with Director with certificate; DBI, however cannot offer time-off. Acting Director Hui said he would like form a committee comprised of in-house staff as well as the public and perhaps commissioners. Ideas/suggestions can be forwarded to Carolyn Jayin, Carolyn.Jayin@sfgov.org.

Drake asked if it was possible to have addendums for foundation, structural and architectural be routed to the same person for consistency. Acting Director Tom Hui said staff workload is a factor but the public can try to request the same person by speaking to the supervisor.

Mel Murphy said he recently got a call from a local architect who received excellent service from DBI.

Henry Karnilowicz asked if there can be clerks specifically assigned to answer questions and schedule electrical and plumbing permits. Ed Sweeney said that the public is encouraged to take advantage of online technology that DBI provides and schedule inspections through the automated system.

Luke O'Brien said he used the telephone automated system recently and found it worked well. However, when trying to reach individual inspectors, one needs to call very early. He asked if there was a way to expedite communications with inspectors by way of text, for example.

Acting Director Hui said portable computer devices that field inspectors will have in the near future will save homeowners and contractors time and improve communications via email.

Alyce Brown suggested that inspector give a courtesy call to give customers a 15 minute window time-frame before arrival to an appointment which she recently experienced with a utilities company.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Acting Director Hui said future agenda items should be brought to Carolyn Jayin's (Carolyn.Jayin@sfgov.org) attention for the next meeting that is scheduled for September 20th. Members asked if John Rahaim could be encouraged to attend the next meeting but in order to do so the PAC meeting will need to be scheduled on a day other than Thursday. All were agreeable to accommodating that change.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 3:15pm.