



PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING NOTES

**Wednesday, October 17, 2012
2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

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

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Acting Director Hui welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

Director Hui reported on the recent fire in West Portal. DBI issued an emergency order for one of the buildings. The department will do what it can to assist affected property owners.

2. UPDATE ON PERMIT & PROJECT TRACKING SYSTEM

Penny Venable gave an update of the project to date. One of the major items in progress is the Accela Citizen Access. They are currently identifying business and system requirements. The vendor has released a high level prototype, and staff is working on a strategy for public input. The other big item is the Accela automation which is for internal use by staff. They are at various stages of development on this item, including core configuration of the system. They are moving forward on the development of reports, scripts, data conversion, and interfaces - APO and IVR. Staff is also working on the Accela mobile office by field testing tablets with the current PTS system.

An issue was brought up about the difficulty in tracking Planning projects and figuring out which Planner is assigned to projects.

Luke O'Brien stated that the Planning Director is reaching out and open to suggestions. A list has been created and will be forwarded to the Planning Director. Members are welcome to add their comments.

It was suggested to provide an updated timeline of the PTS project for the next PAC meeting.

3. UPDATE ON LEGISLATION AFFECTING DBI

Bill Strawn reported on an item which has been introduced at the Board of Supervisors that will provide more flexibility and time for permit extensions. They expect to have a hearing in early November. This also includes a few fee updates and language that will allow DBI to do premium 3R reports. Another item is David Chiu's proposed legislation on Chapter 41A that goes after commercial landlords that are subletting space that he believes should be a part of the housing stock. He is looking at DBI's role in enforcement of this legislation. According to Rosemary Bosque of Housing Inspection, the department has had two complaints in 12 years that it has

pursued tied to Chapter 41A. With this legislation, the department is expecting more complaints that are likely to come in, and it also allows any third party non-profit to file lawsuits. DBI would need to set up an investigation mechanism that will include notices of violation, Director's hearings, etc. At this point, it is unclear how much of a burden this will be for DBI. Director Hui stated he sees this issue as more of a Planning issue. These complaints will be difficult to investigate. It was asked if there would be funds provided to DBI for its enforcement efforts and if additional staff would be added. Bill Strawn stated DBI has made it clear that there would be a penalty or administrative fee that would need to be charged in order to recover the costs associated with enforcement. The language is still being worked out.

A third item of interest is Supervisor Cohen's legislation that triples penalties on the owners of 10 or more foreclosed properties that are not maintained properly and are defined as a nuisance. This legislation will be effective November 6.

DBI staff will be meeting with Supervisor Kim to discuss legislation that will amend the vacant building ordinance and increase reporting responsibilities. Staff is awaiting the details.

4. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Drake Gardner brought up an item involving DPW's request to submit permits at the same time one would submit their building permit if it requires Planning's review. Staff stated DPW is already included in the routing sheet. Director Hui stated staff will need direction in writing from DPW in order to make any process changes.

Director Hui reported on the Department of Public Health's (DPH) requirement that all restaurants or retail involving food preparation that need front door replacement or sprinkler permits needs to be routed to DPH. DBI has asked a representative from DPH to attend the meeting to explain further, but they declined. Staff also requested DPH have this requirement in writing. Members expressed their concern that this will cause delays and hold up businesses as DPH does not have the staff to review all these types of projects.

Bobbie Sue Hood expressed her concerns with the lack of clarity and accountability in the Planning Department.

There was an inquiry for the latest on the soft story legislation. Bill Strawn stated the mandatory legislation has yet to be formally introduced. They are still working on the voluntary portion of the program that has been in place for the past three years. The Department had received 1-2 per month of voluntary walk-ins. With the recent announcement of Patrick Otellini as the new earthquake point person who will be charged with implementing the CAPSS recommendations, it may trigger the introduction of the mandatory legislation.

It was suggested that members go before the Planning Commission to express their concerns during public comment.

It was suggested to revisit and address Planning items that were brought up during the BPR.

It was suggested to have Planning assign designated staff to oversee smaller projects.

President McCarthy suggested documenting concerns and complaints to the Planning Director. Members stated there is fear of retaliation or "blacklisting," if complaints against Planning staff were documented.

It was reported there has been long wait times at CPB for submittals and payments.

There was an inquiry on the status of premium 3R. Ed Sweeney stated the main issue is getting clerks on board. Once staffing is on board, there should not be a need for premium.

5. MISCELLANEOUS PLANNING ISSUES

a. Implementation time for proposed changes to Planning processes

Planning Director John Rahaim introduced Jeff Joslin, who is the new Director of Current Planning. He will be managing the entitlement process which includes the preservation program.

It was asked if Mr. Joslin would be the new representative from Planning who will attend the PAC meetings. Director Rahaim has not made the final decision, but it is his hope to have him as the representative.

Members expressed their frustration with submittals and over the counter service received from the Planning Department when it comes to smaller projects. Customers complained about the lack of response from planners with regard to project status.

Director Rahaim stated he has brought up member's concerns pertaining to responsiveness issues in his staff meetings. It is Planning Department policy to return phone calls and email within 24-hours, and it is an item that is part of each performance appraisal.

There was a discussion on criteria for CEQA reviews and how Planning interprets and makes their determination.

Director Rahaim stated Planning is in the process of adding additional staff.

b. Possible Creation of Public Advisory Committee for Planning Department

It was suggested to have a separate PAC meeting with Planning so that process changes could be discussed and communicated. Director Rahaim urged members to not have a separate Planning PAC meeting. He requested to work with the existing DBI group. Director Rahaim stated he will have a representative attend DBI's monthly meetings. It was said that customer feedback in these types of meetings allows departments to be aware of operational problems.

The issue of influence from certain neighborhood groups having an effect on projects was discussed. Director Rahaim stated this is more of a perception problem versus reality. If members have specific instances on this item, Director Rahaim stated that they need to call him directly.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No future agenda items were discussed.

Planning Director John Rahaim agreed to attend the November meeting. The November meeting will be rescheduled to Wednesday, November 14 at 2:00 pm.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 3:48 pm.