



## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** City of Lapeer City Commission  
**From:** Caitlyn Habben, Planning Consultant  
**Date:** February 4, 2020  
**Re:** **Building Department – Building Contractor Luncheon Follow Up Report**

As many of you are aware, the Building Department and Planning Department held a Building Contractor Luncheon on January 29, 2020 at Chef G's from 12:00pm to 2:00pm. There were a variety of people specifically invited that have been through the Planning and Building Department processes. Specifically, different trades were there to help offer feedback about the various departments. The original concept was to focus on the Building Department, but as part of the Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) program, we included the Planning Department.

The Building Department and Planning Department did brief introductions about various documents that are available and general information. There were a series of general questions participants were asked to provide feedback on. Below are the general questions and out of the 16 attendees how many agreed with the statement. There was also a representative from Consumers Energy and seven City Staff members in attendance at various times to answer questions.

- Is the Building Department responsive enough? **15 Attendees agreed**
- Do you find the Building Department office hours convenient? **14 Attendees agreed**
- Do you feel you were treated fairly / the same in the Building Department? **12 Attendees agreed**
- Do you think the cost of fees are excessive? **1 Attendee agreed**

The luncheon had a series of boards with the following topics including:

- Office Hours / Issues
- Inspections / Permits
- What needs to be explained?
- Planning Department
- What are you doing well?
- General Comments

Participants were given sticky notes at each table to write down comments and then put them on the boards. Below is a list of related sticky note comments and dialog with participants that were recorded.

### **Office Hours/Issues**

- There is obvious tension between the two Building Department employees.
- The office staff member appears overworked and should have additional help.
- A second office staff member would be very helpful.
- Office staff member is not very friendly or professional.
- The City of Lapeer is easier to work with than Construction Code Authority (CCA).

### Inspections/ Permits

- Very prompt on inspections.
- Permit checklist are very helpful.
- They keep appointments for inspections.
- It is important that everyone is treated the same, if I am told to follow the rules in the book so does everyone else. I feel like that is happening.
- Look into having each contractor a registration number, so they do not have to continuously fill out the same information on the forms.
  - It is believed the State of Michigan requirements the repeat information on the forms rather than the City of Lapeer.
- The comparable for the rental income should be more based on Lapeer not Davison, Flint for commercial residence projects.

### What needs to be explained?

- Additional public awareness of façade improvements requires a permit.
- Additional public awareness of the new business packet to walk-through the various departments and forms that should be filled out.
- How does someone schedule an inspection?
- Why is there an annual tap fee on water bills? I have multiple apartments and a tap fee for each unit while I only have one water meter.

### Planning Department

- Easy to work with and very helpful. \*\*
- The “wall” requirement buffering different zoning districts is an odd requirement. It would create walls that block out area all over the city/other properties.
- Not letting an irrigation system run off stormwater from the retention pond as a well might be bad as the City continues to grow out site of it establish infrastructure.
- The landscaping/tree requirements are above most cities. Which can impact cost/feasibility of some projects.
- I believe the parking lot island requirements should be adjusted for multiple family projects to help with parking / require other green area for amenities.

### What are we doing well?

- It is important for the Building and Planning Department to keep communicating.
- Darryl and Tim are very helpful and responsive.

### General Comments

- Enjoyed being invited to provide feedback, wish other communities did the same. \*\*
- Breakdown water and sewer charges on the monthly bill.
- The DPW tap fees are extreme. \$8,000 - 9,000 is a lot of money.
- Permit and tap fees are fair compared to some cities, but more than others.
- The DPW Director is difficult to work with.

The \* symbol indicates if multiple people had that comment.

The Redevelopment Ready Community program requires that we conduct some type of outreach strategy about the development process once per year. City Staff will work to build upon this activity and look on how to improve it for the following year.