

**Centre Region Code Committee  
Centre Region Council of Government Building  
General Forum Room  
February 13, 2008  
MEETING MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Koll called the February 13, 2008 Code Committee meeting to order at 9:25 am.

Members present: Dave Koll, Walter Wise, Cecil Irvin, and Silvi Lawrence

Staff present: Greg Mussi, Jim Steff, and Tammy Strouse

Others: Dan Abruzzo (Heritage I)

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Wise made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2008 Code Committee meeting as presented. Ms. Lawrence seconded the motion. Vote in favor was unanimous.

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

There were no citizen comments.

**MONTHLY REPORTS**

Mr. Mussi presented the January monthly reports. Mr. Mussi reported that January was slow, but there were significant projects under review. There were no questions or comments regarding the monthly reports.

**BOARD OF APPEALS RE-APPOINTMENTS**

Mr. Mussi explained that a function of the Code Committee was to make recommendations to the General Forum for the re-appointments and appointments to the Centre Region Building and Housing Code Board of Appeals.

Mr. Mussi explained that one change was necessary to the Board of Appeals appointments that were presented in the agenda. He continued that one of Property Maintenance board re-appointments was no longer interested in serving. Mr. Mussi distributed the Board of Appeals application for Nicole Woodring, a State College resident and long time renter.

Mr. Mussi asked the Committee to consider the re-appointment of Michael Norris, Kenneth Sagen, Laura Chuba and Robert Kistler and to appoint Nicole Woodring to the Centre Region Code Board of Appeals.

Mr. Wise made the motion “The Code Administration Committee recommends to the COG General Forum that Michael Norris, Kenneth Sagen, Laura Chuba and Robert Kistler be re-appointed and Nicole Woodring be appointed to the Board of Appeals for a three year term commencing February 25, 2008.”

Mr. Irvin seconded the motion. Vote in favor was unanimous.

#### **PROPOSED METHOD FOR DETERMINING PERMIT FEES FOR COMMERCIAL RENOVATION PROJECTS**

Mr. Mussi stated that at the November 26, 2007 General Forum meeting, members approved a motion to receive the CRCA proposed method to determine permit fees for renovation projects. The General Forum forwarded the recommendation onto the municipalities for comments.

Mr. Mussi added that in addition to the municipal comments, the proposal had been presented to the members of Heritage I of the CBICC.

Mr. Mussi explained that based on the review of the municipal comments and comments received from the Heritage I members, staff had recommended a permit fee that was:

- Revenue neutral; no profit/no loss
- Based on actual staff time

Mr. Mussi stated that the permit fee would include:

- ✓ Application fee of \$75.00, paid at permit application submission;
- ✓ Plan Review fee of \$60.00 per hour, paid prior to permit issuance;
- ✓ Field Inspection fee of \$75.00 per inspection, paid prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Use and Occupancy.

Mr. Steff stated that the advantage of the permit fee calculation based on the hourly rate was it rewarded complete and accurate plans.

Mr. Steff asked if the building inspectors could do multiple inspections in one trip.

Mr. Mussi replied that often the building inspectors would perform a couple different inspections in one trip, i.e. a framing; plumbing and mechanical inspection could be performed in a single site visit. Mr. Mussi suggested that the inspection fee should be site visit fee.

Ms. Lawrence noted that the majority of the fees are collected at the end of the project and questioned if the applicant could be given a count of the number of inspections that could be expected and collect half the fee upfront.

Mr. Mussi explained that the scope of the project would vary the number and type of inspections.

Mr. Steff concurred with Ms. Lawrence. He stated that if staff could give an estimate of the number of inspections there would be no surprise at the end of the project.

Mr. Mussi stated that staff could estimate an average number of inspections for different types of projects and use that to estimate the inspection costs.

Mr. Wise stated that something that could be considered was a monthly invoice for projects that would run a year or longer. Mr. Wise asked Mr. Abruzzo if the basic method was reasonable.

Mr. Abruzzo replied that the method was reasonable because everyone paid for what they get. He added that every project had a minimal number of inspections; the new system encourages contractors to plan ahead. He continued that the new permit fees would keep contractors and design professionals honest to do the job right the first time and prevent re-inspections.

Mr. Abruzzo stated that Heritage I did not like the original proposal based on work level, because it would be complicated. He added that the Board had met and agreed that the hourly rate proposal was fair and were in support of the fees.

Mr. Abruzzo asked if the declared cost of projects would ever be used to determine the permit fee.

Mr. Mussi replied that the declared cost would not be used in any circumstance except new construction. He reminded committee that the new fee schedule would not apply to residential projects.

Ms. Lawrence suggested that the Agency could collect a minimum inspection fee based on typical inspections.

Mr. Mussi summarized that the Committee recommended that the Agency have a method that would allow some of the inspection costs to be paid at the time of permit issuance and remainder to be paid at completion of the project. Mr. Mussi stated that staff would charge up front for the basic number of inspections for the type of project and all additional inspections would be paid at completion, prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy.

Mr. Koll recommended that the Agency should allow for electronic submittal of commercial plans. He continued that allowing electronic submission and re-submission would cut cost for contractors.

Mr. Mussi replied that even if the Agency would allow electronic submission, two paper documents would need to be generated, one for the construction site and one copy to be kept in the office for archiving.

Mr. Koll stated that electronic submission was a direction that the Agency needed to move toward. He suggested that submissions and re-submissions could be made electronically and the final submission with code approval would be paper.

Mr. Wise said that staff would need to re-review the final set of paper plans to ensure that plans had not been changed from the electronic plans.

Mr. Mussi suggested looking at other municipalities for similar situations.

Mr. Irvin made the motion *“that the Code Administration Committee recommends that, the General Forum receive the proposed method for determining permit fees for all renovation projects with the exception of one and two single family dwellings as revised and recommended by the Code Administration Committee; refer it to the participating municipalities for adoption; and furthermore, that the signed municipal resolutions be forwarded to the COG Executive Director by April 1, 2008”*.

Mr. Wise seconded the motion. Vote in favor was unanimous.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Mussi updated the Committee on the Sewage Management Program. He gave the dates of the Public Informational meetings.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Being no other business, the February 13, 2008 Centre Region Code Administration Committee meeting was adjourned at 10:12 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tammy Strouse  
Recording Secretary