

Planning and Development Services Advisory Committee

KICK-OFF MEETING

February 16, 2016, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Explanation: Following is a transcription of notes recorded on a flipchart by PDS staff during the meeting.

Committee Member Comments Made During Agenda Items #1, #2, or #3

- Streamline process. City's attitude should be, "How can we help you."
- Have you looked at "best practices"?
- Are you working on upgrading computer systems?
- Phoenix has a process that allows "certified" architects to review plans
- Have been some other groups that have looked at processes such as Certificates of Occupancy
- Need to be careful about changes to processes – remembering that intent is often to deal with health and safety issues (two sides of argument)
- Big difference between developers, lawyers, etc.
- PDS reviewers tear apart architects' and engineers' plans. Horrible.
- Need to look at attitude of reviewers
- Over the 15 years I have interacted with PDS have seen attitudes change in a positive way. We as public need to help with improvements.
- Going forward, will site and building inspectors be cross trained?
- Committee member asked what information/data systems PDS currently uses.
- Have you looked at Tucson Water and other departments (besides Transportation) re delegated authority?
- Given announced reduced hours – would be helpful to know when reviewers are available to talk to individually. Should be lots of time for reviews on Friday given that many engineering firms are closed.

Committee Member Comments Elaborating on Written Ideas They Provided in Agenda Item #4.

See Attachment 1 for transcription of index card ideas.

- Sign code – various interpretations
- Consistency in interpretation and inspection needed
 - Time – predictability needed. Increases with reviewers/inspectors
 - Lack of training
- Consider concurrent reviews (as done by Pima County)
- Plan amendment vs. rezoning
- Would be helpful if PDS staff understood/saw themselves as a link in the overall chain that leads to a completed project
- Need a proactive, problem solving attitude. Synergy.
 - Clients need choices with associated time lines
- Building code consistency with Pima County
- The amount of information required on entitlement documents complicates later revisions.
- Scale down process for variances.
- Consider establishing a subcommittee of the PDS Advisory Committee to compare PDS and County practices.
- Increase off-site resources.

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- Promote self-certification.
- Keep staff on same page.
- Educate the public on process and policy.
- Late comments / hold-ups
- Cross over between signs and building codes.
- Comprehensive sign package.
- Signs holding up business
 - Include with rest of process
 - Historic signs?
 - Signs aren't about health and safety – more subjective.
- Process agenda
 - Flow charts
- Simplify UDC
- Improve staff morale
 - Technology
 - Training / education
- Keep process moving
 - Eliminate culture of “no”
 - Provide options w/denial
- Need fast turnaround
 - Multi-process
 - Third party
- Urban building code is not understandable
- Combine addressing of water and sewer with PSDS process.
- Renovations of existing buildings / “grandfathering”
- Discretionary complications
- Simplify pedestrian variances
- Streamline development process
 - Empower the registrant
- Promote a cooperative process to reduce delays
- New comments on successive reviews
- Connect all external agencies
 - Project manager
 - Collaborative process with applicant
 - Real Estate, Water, TDOT
- PSDS is bigger than just permits. Notifications, etc.

**Flipchart Notes from
Planning and Development Service Advisory Committee Meeting
March 30, 2016**

Flipchart Notes by Rebecca Ruopp; detailed notes taken by Leslie Ethen.

Committee Member Comments

- Seeing better attitude. Great changes overall.
- Post organizational chart. Provide contact information.
- Will there be opportunity to take re-submittals, etc. to Project Manager?
- Staff: Expect to have more generalists by end of summer
- Triage?
- Clarify responsibilities of “project manager” or “generalist” or whatever you are calling them
- Used to do sessions for public regarding such things as ADA
- There are opportunities for education from other professional organizations
Staff: Perhaps links to relevant educational opportunities could be included on PDSD website
- Compiling list of issues that need to be addressed – provide written interpretation
- In Australia, the name and cell number of person responsible for a project is put on a sign at the project site.
- Change-of-use code – helped, but still some problems/unintended consequences
- How do we memorialize interpretation so public can see. Lot of public frustration probably comes from not have consistent interpretations. Have zoning administrator put interpretations in writing.
- For consistency, same staff should be assigned to a project throughout process.
- Will a simple plan with one complicated piece stay with generalist?
- Should flag project at beginning if there is a complicated piece.
- (Comment regarding Hillside Development Zone.)
- Do you categorize a project based on size or value (\$)?
Staff: Would be more about site constraints.
- What about more structural reviews by third parties? Expand through contracts.
- What about charging for faster reviews?
- Teaming with Pima County structure reviews? County could help City when needed and vice versa.
- Early determination
- Need to recognize conflict between flexibility and consistency.
- Was a problem at Information Desk when you were just sent to someone else and ended up waiting there only to be told it wasn't the person you needed to see.
- If you could provide plans to PDSD as pdfs rather than as hard copies, more than one reviewer could review plans simultaneously.
- Overloaded staff – technical training adds one more responsibility

Parking Lot:

- Read 60% of buildings don't have Certificates of Occupancy (COs). What does staff think about this?
Staff (Clayton): Need to do outreach to let the public know that the CO outreach process has been simplified.
- Named/un-named streets: Can part on named streets/alleys. Should name those alleys that are un-named so one can park on them.

PDSD Advisory Committee Meeting / April 26, 2016

Flipchart Notes

Recorded and transcribed by Rebecca Ruopp

- Why are we looking for third party site review? Is there a problem?
- Why can't you hire former City employees as contractors?
- Why is third party site review difficult?
- What is demand for self-certified architects?
- When you have an issue with self certification, can PDSD override?
- Wanted these processes looked at for streamlining. (Self-certification not working very well in Phoenix.)
- Sounds as if third party is working?
- What have other communities done for expediting zoning review?
- 20-day response time – who sets this time?
- Re 20 days – architects and engineers call on 19th day to see if review is done.
- A 20-day wait is expensive for development teams.
- Lisa explained City is training more employees as generalists.
- Could City consider doing a completeness check of development package first (similar to County)?
- County does completeness check within 5 days – once that is complete, County tries to get the review done in another 5 – 10 days.
- If 20 days is deadline, people tend to take 20 days – if less, they take less time.
- Talked about a pilot program.
- County gets fewer plans than City.
- City has been good about doing small/simple plan reviews at the counter.
- Afraid people are submitting deficient plans. This is causing problems for everybody.
- Why can't everybody do pre-submittals?
- Lots of time when I (Keri) am involved in pre-submittals, don't have all materials yet. Doing pre-submittal to get guidance, therefore, don't think pre-submittal would work as a completeness check.
- Combine – same PDSD people either pre-submittal for guidance, or let them do completeness check
- How do people feel about appointment based vs. walk-in? (*Some committee members said that would be fine.*)
- To set up meeting, should be some material required – application.
- Pre-apps – could range from guidance to completeness checks.
- Going to be asking for variance – more pre-apps.
- Cautionary note – could need more variances.
- Risk associated with approach. Applicants need to understand risk. Could be expedited with risk, or undertake full approach.
- Talking about getting people through process faster and to Board
- Process should take into account confidentiality
- Think about forum for getting some initial guidance (*Someone responded that was already in place – i.e., walk through.*)
- Tuesday afternoon is time to get general questions answered.
- Confusion around table reflects the need for cheat sheet with options and potential consequences

PDSD Advisory Committee Meeting / April 26, 2016

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- Boiler plate comments without specificity – you have to get hold of reviewer to interpret
- Bit more proactivity – get accused of wanting staff to design project (See in other jurisdictions.)
- Want people to pull more permits.
- Staff has insular attitude.
- Collaborative attitude doesn't mean we are asking staff to design project.
- Applicants don't always know code has changed – staff should let applicant know.
- There is generally a cooperative attitude.
- Love walk through.
- Why does everything have to be administrative standards?
- Development package used to be three parts/standards.
- Development package – don't know why we have to show details (it's in the standards). Gets repetitious and redundant.
- Lots of people don't know what the standard actually means.
- Last two months more openness to concurrent review, etc.
- Like Pro system – can look at reviewer comments within 20 days – rather than at end of 20 days
- Pro updates twice a day
- Pro being completely rebuilt
- Can you put a note on Pro that says when it was last updated?
- Is City open to look at shorter than 20 days?
- Could a list be created of different times for different processes?
- Another strategy for “pedestrian” projects.
- Second round comments should take less than 20 days.
- Need to consolidate rezoning (laborious) and variances.
- 60 days can be a problem.
- Sounds like key is to get in early, get right people together, work as a team.
- Find out at tail end that there is a problem with sign.
- If you see same variance over and over, suggests need to change code.
- Sign code appeal board – only four people – problem.
- Anything that helps building City – faster. Feel as if half a dozen neighborhoods are running things (comment from Chamber rep.)
- Recommendation – more consistency across committees/boards
- This Committee has an opportunity to streamline to save \$. Delays aren't helping City generate revenue.
- There's going to be competition – people will go elsewhere.
- Get rid of some committees that aren't that helpful.
- Haven't begun to look at micro-business help.

PDSO Advisory Committee Meeting / June 6, 2016

Flipchart Notes

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NOTES RELATED TO INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

- This is the fourth meeting of the PDSO Advisory Committee.
- Nicole announced that she had shared with the City Manager that she would be retiring in Fall 2016.
- Nicole explained that right now the Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday, June 28, 2016, was planned as the last meeting of the full committee. However, she suggested the possibility that if there were topics that warranted further exploration that might be done through in informal working groups.
- One participant suggested that if issues needed to be further defined that be done by members of the existing Advisory Committee.
- A participant noted that he had to keep explaining to members of the public with whom he talked that the Advisory Committee is just looking at issues that he described as technical, “low-hanging fruit.” He suggested that for broader, more public process issues consideration be given to involving others, including community activists.

NOTES RELATED TO DISCUSSION RE UDC CODE CHANGES

- *[Note: Dan Bursuck distributed to Committee members a handout titled, “Planning and Development Services Advisory Committee; Item 3: Unified Development Code (UDC) Code Changes, Monday, June 6, 2016. He then reviewed the handout with the Committee and answered questions. Committee members then discussed.]*
- Re MS&R Setback Relief – Participant asked whether developer would still need to sign covenant. *[Nicole noted that PDSO was meeting with Real Estate and Attorney’s Office to discuss.]*
- Participant asked whether rezoning-related variances requested of Board of Adjustment taken into consideration in ongoing review of Overlapping Plan Amendment and Rezoning.
- Participant noted he hoped that the “HPZ Window Amendment” would allow use of more “off-the-shelf” windows in historic structures.
- In regard to ongoing discussion regarding “Plan Tucson Urban Overlay District,” Committee member inquired whether PDSO would be willing to extend discussion beyond several groups staff mentioned (e.g., Mayor and Council and Grant Road Task Force).
- In ongoing discussion re “Plan Tucson Overlay District,” participant said it was important to have criteria for decision as to where overlays would be applied, so the locations don’t seem arbitrary.
- Staff noted that the intent for each overlay would need to be articulated.
- Participant suggested that if there were areas for which studies had been done to identify impacts, etc., that information might help in providing a rationale/justification for an overlay.
- Participant asked staff if a generalized overlay was being considered. Went on to say that an ongoing challenge was often parking, particularly related to businesses.

PDSO Advisory Committee Meeting / June 6, 2016

Flipchart Notes

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- *[Nicole explained that initially had thought about a code change that could apply city-wide, but there was enough public concern about such an approach that staff was now looking at a more strategic overlay approach.]*
- Participant shared that it seemed difficult to select specific areas for overlays.
- Suggested that maybe criteria be tied to residential areas along arterials where residential directly adjacent to an arterial is challenging. Opens door to using alleys. (Currently can't access commercial off alleys in residential areas.)
- Suggestion that maybe incentives be given to take down non-conforming buildings.
- It was noted that MS&R affects lots of old sites.
- Short-term rentals – Can do in residential area, but constraints such as lot size that don't work in older areas of Tucson
- Consider changes to code that would make short-term rentals legal.
- Someone said they thought this might be searching to fix a problem that doesn't exist.
- Participant noted that State Legislature just addressed the issue of _____. Participant said that given Legislature's decision he didn't think anything could be done now.
- Participant noted that public is beginning to ask questions about permitting related to tiny houses.
- Regarding impact fees – several participants noted that change of uses fees were a problem. Thought impact fees were OK for new development.
- Staff pointed out in response to a comment, that County and City Impact Fee regulations were different.
- Participant said finding information on how to calculate impact fees was difficult.
- Participant suggested that identification of possible impact fees be part of pre-application process, including information on how to calculate.
- Participant brought up some issues related to R4 (residential care). Noted that should make sure that specific standards and site exemptions relate.

NOTES RELATED TO DISCUSSION RE NEW PDSO DIRECTION SEARCH & SELECTION

- Participant asked how qualifications are set for position.
- *[Albert Elias, who attended this meeting, explained that the process began with review of the posted job description to see if needs adjustment.]*
- Someone asked what the current description was. Staff distributed a copy to each Committee member.
- Participant expressed concern about someone coming in without understanding of department's current processes/approaches.
- Participant suggested that it would be important to find out what heads of various PDSO sections think regarding what PDSO should be doing and take that into consideration in Director selection.

PDSD Advisory Committee Meeting / June 6, 2016

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- *[Nicole noted that the message she had discussed with the City Manager was that the department is in the process of rebuilding itself and wants to continue with this process.]*
- Participant expressed concern about someone coming in without understanding of department's current processes/approaches.
- Participant shared experiences with "head hunters" and said he was worried about those who don't look at local approach.
- Worried about potential candidates who don't connect with local situation/conditions.
- *[Albert Elias explained it was important to have a Clear Scope of Work and to understand that the City Manager was the hiring authority.]*
- Committee member asked whether members could email comments to staff regarding Director job description.
- Suggestion that maybe possible local candidates be vetted first before going outside.
- Seems local knowledge is important.
- Consider possible candidates among City staff first.
- Local could be broader than just department.
- What are the Mayor and Council's criteria? Do they provide input? *[Nicole said that CM would be talking to Mayor and Council about position.]*
- Seems important that a Director understand they will be interacting with Mayor and Council; might not always be the case elsewhere.
- *[Albert Elias pointed out that Directorships were no longer civil service positions in the City, which could allow more open interview process.]*
- Committee member noted that city was in a transitional period from more suburban to more urban and that given this there could be positives to bringing in outside person/someone new.
- Pointed out that don't necessarily want someone who is looking for a job – maybe someone who has been identified as the type of person that would be good for the job.
- It was suggested that perhaps Advisory Committee members could meet with City Manager to share their thoughts regarding Director position.
- Participant asked Nicole her thought regarding important criteria for her replacement. *[Nicole responded that very important to her was that the new person be like by and able to work with staff.]*
- Participant noted that they thought the person should be someone who had served in various roles performed in a department such as PDSD.
- Could we also look at the Building Official's job description?
- Suggested that someone who had had a positive experience elsewhere addressing types of issues Tucson is facing could be helpful.

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- Participant said he had been thinking about an earlier Committee meeting at which the extensive needs for IT upgrades had been discussed. Thought it was important that that be addressed so that it didn't become a key effort of new Director. Wondered if impact fees could be used to help with upgrade process. *[Nicole pointed out that a technology fee is part of permit fee and that technology upgrade is underway.]*
- Participant asked about steps in Director selection process. *[Albert Elias explained that generally there would be an initial short list of candidates who would then be assessed through a multi-prong approach that would go beyond just oral interviews with candidates. The short-list would then be narrowed down further.]*
- Participant asked if it would be possible for Committee service to be extended and for members to be part of interview process. *[Nicole said she would talk to the City Manager about this and other suggestions.]*