

# Industry Working Group

August 24, 2016 Meeting Notes

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## Attendees

Taro Echiburu, Krista Piazza, Byron Foster, David Gauranich, Kevin Kiesz, Dan Pronsolino, David Alvarado, Gary Pronsolino, Jack Kasbergen, Dan Tafoya, Barry Burns, Anna Louzon, Debbie Anderson, Todd Riddiough, Mike Haworth, April Meneghetti, Tim Murphy, Spencer Defty, others not included in the sign-up sheet.

**Introductions:** All attendees introduced themselves and the organization that they represent.

- **Purpose of Working Group:** Provide regular venue for vendors, contractors, homeowners and others who frequently do business at Community Services permitting counter to share concerns/identify solutions
- **Goal:** Improve service delivery and strengthen relationships with community
- **Initial meeting:** Round table/open forum to identify topics of concern and agenda items for future meetings, and address specific inquiries
- **General comments:**
  - Similar forum in Elk Grove for development of action plan for department with objectives of process improvement and information sharing; group can assist in disseminating information to community
    - **Follow-up: share/post meeting minutes**
  - Need to be mindful of group make-up for broad representation, yet manageable/effective size

## Discussion/Concerns/Ideas

- **Development Review Committee:** Development Review Committee (DRC) used to meet monthly and included Project applicant, Fire, Planning & Building and other interested parties; staff was available to answer questions, review specific plans and identify solutions for challenging projects
  - Goal was to streamline processes and be more “user friendly”
  - Slowed as economy slowed, eventually not utilized and fell off altogether
  - Butte County still holds similar meetings
- **3rd Party Plan Check Concerns**
  - County goals/messaging positive and supportive of ag business development, but Plan Check contractor does not seem to share same values
    - **Inquiry: Is contractor aware of Board’s goals and does contractor share same values?**
  - Plan Check contractor “looking for billable hours” by adding more work to review than necessary
    - **Recommendation: Contract per-review vs. hourly**
- **All requirements should be aligned and highlighted up front**
  - All divisions and staff within should have same interpretation of regs/code
  - Building and Environmental Health not talking to each other and seem to have conflicting policies; i.e. Building says one threshold acceptable; EH says threshold not adequate
  - Good service would be certainty from the start from all divisions/staff

- **Customer Service**
  - Interpretation of code should be liberal and in favor of client/customer service; not strict constructionist reading (Taro noted: past experiences of “flexibility” may not actually exist in code, but rather been violations of code)
  - County seems more concerned with risk management rather than exercising latitude/finding happy medium
  - Industry does not feel staff values customer or understands contractors have to run a business and report to their customers; delays and changing costs make doing business a real challenge and affects contractor’s reputation
  - Need to create culture change so staff can help instead of shrugging off customer concerns as “that’s the way it is”
  - Seems staff does “as little as possible”
  - Reports of old County records missing; two examples given of opening a permit and being informed that 18 year-old permit not closed out properly and fees unpaid, yet customer had record of payment and proper closure
  
- **Fire Department Review**
  - Examples cited in which Fire reviewed plans and stated adequate to fire code, then County or 3rd party Plan Check added more “fire code” requirements to project
  - Fire asserts they have statutory authority to interpret fire code and Plan Check should not be able to require beyond what Fire has deemed adequate
  
- **Fees**
  - Participants claim fees do not make sense and do not align with actual costs to provide services to residents/end users; hard to explain to homeowner why a permit is so much in relation to total project cost, makes homeowners want to find service providers that will not go through proper processes
  - Community Services may not be doing best job of telling story on how fees are structured and explaining full cost recovery model
    - **Inquiry:** How are fees calculated and why so high?
  
- **Other Ideas for Future**
  - Permit simplicity model and looking at similar model for businesses like solar
    - It was suggested that the group meet in 60 days and limit the meeting to one hour; a recurring meeting invite will be sent. Tuesdays and Wednesdays seem to be the best days for everyone to meet.
    - The minutes will be distributed. It was suggested that they be posted to our website.

**Next Meeting:** October 26th at 2:00pm at Department of Community Services, 292 W Beamer Street, Woodland, Cache Creek conference room