



Meeting Date: October 17, 2016

Report No. CC-16-130

Agenda Item No. 7-a

Status: General Orders

Purpose: To inform the Council of a proposal to change the permitting and inspection process for residential (1- and 2-family) dwellings.

Background Summary: Since the adoption of building regulations in the 1960's, the City of Stillwater has been responsible for all permitting and inspections of buildings located within the City limits. From the adoption of the first building code by the City Council, all building construction within the City has been required to conform to the various codes adopted by the Council. Over time, Council has periodically adopted new building codes as they have been updated and reissued by the national code councils. Currently, the City operates under the 2009 I-Codes (International Code Council) for all building construction.

A little over 5 years ago, the Oklahoma Uniform Building Code Commission (OUBCC) adopted the 2009 International Residential Code (IRC) with an effective date of July 15, 2011. The IRC includes all building requirements for 1- and 2-family dwellings. The adoption of the IRC 2009 by the OUBCC was the first time a residential code had been adopted by the State of Oklahoma. The OUBCC also adopted codes for commercial buildings (all buildings excluding 1- and 2-family dwellings) with an effective date of November 2, 2012. Since that time, the OUBCC has adopted updated commercial codes effective November 2015 and the adopted updated residential code will become effective November 1, 2016.

Prompted by a variety of reasons, including the State's adoption of minimum building codes that are applicable to all jurisdictions across Oklahoma, staff evaluated the City's established permitting and inspection process. One of the objectives of the evaluation was to determine if the permitting and inspection process could be more efficient while maintaining a high standard of code compliance assurance. Through the evaluation process, the idea of utilizing the capabilities of private enterprise to perform certain services was vetted and determined to be not only viable but beneficial for the residential building permitting and inspection process.

The proposal is to establish a 3rd party inspection and certification system for building inspections of 1- and 2-family dwellings to be performed by individuals that are certified through the International Codes Council (ICC) and licensed by the OUBCC. 1- and 2-family building permits and certificates of occupancy will continue to be issued by the City but the inspections and code compliance certifications will be performed by the 3rd party individuals. City inspectors who currently perform the 1- and 2-family inspections will refocus towards inspections of the private connections to the public infrastructure

system (water, sewer, street, sidewalk, electric, as well as gas), public infrastructure itself and inspections of all other types of building construction such as facilities for assembly of persons such as shopping centers, hotels, retail establishments, churches, schools, government, service establishments, industrial establishments, etc..

An outreach and informational campaign was initiated to bring attention of this proposal to the public and to those most directly affected. The proposal was introduced to the local Builders Relations Committee that meets monthly with City staff and to the public through a press release with brief video. A few interested persons contacted staff about the process, voicing their concerns or simply inquiring as to how the changes would occur.

Budget Impact: The following are potential budget impacts:

Personnel: At this time, it is anticipated that there will be no reduction in staffing. Current staff will be refocused towards other duties as described above.

Travel: Travel to and from 1- and 2-family residential sites will be reduced greatly.

Building permit revenues: Revenues may be reduced if fees are adjusted to cover only administrative costs. Development fees such as transportation, stormwater, water and wastewater will remain unaffected.

If directed to proceed, staff will further evaluate the budget impacts of the proposal and present more detailed information in a future report.

Prior Council Action or Part of an Approved Project: No

Related Items:

http://stillwater.org/city_to_adopt_updated_building_codes_for_residential_structures.php

Code Amendments: Amendments to the City Code will be required to implement the proposal. Based on the information presented herein and discussion at the Council meeting, with Council's direction, staff will prepare draft ordinances for the Council's consideration at a future meeting.

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Reviewed by: Dan Blankenship, Deputy City Manager

Submitted by: Norman McNickle, City Manager

Attachments: Flowchart of current process; Flowchart of proposed process