

City of Tucson Code Enforcement (CE) Michael Wyneken Discussion Items - June 24, 2015

1. Status of filling CE Administrator position - interview panel
Wyneken (W) expects that the position will be advertized in July. No word yet on any interview panel or citizen participation in same.
2. Current staffing - turnover, new hires
All 17 inspector positions are filled and working. A new Community Service Representative (CSR) started June 29. One of the other four current CSRs may leave near the end of the year to be a stay-at-home mom. There is a fresh HR list for CSRs, potentially allowing rapid replacement.
3. Recent Issues
Malicious reporting - right of way vegetation
W says such malicious reporting happens a lot. A fine line exists among values involved.
NPO wording
Wording related to enforcement in City Code would need to be changed in several places.
Fire & health inspectors in certain cases
In specific situations, these inspectors are called in.
4. \$75 reinspection fee collection
Not used much any more since it costs \$125 to collect the \$75 and only about 40% of the time is anything at all collected. The City does not use a collection agency. CE is focusing on reducing the number of trips any case requires and moving to citation sooner.
5. Postcard program
There is a plan to redesign the postcard system now being used, to make it simpler. The new plan is to send a generic postcard immediately to the address of the complaint saying that a violation has been reported. W says that many rental agreements require that the renter maintain the property not the owner. Bad addresses are a problem, especially those reported through the web. The new budget year (starting July 1) will provide funds for printing and mailing. I suggested that neighbors could advise about compliance at postcard addresses, thus obviating the need for the first inspector visit. W wondered whether legal issues would arise – something to check into.
6. Alley clean-ups
I mentioned to W that early contact with NA officers upon notice of a widespread alley problem might produce support for a NA cleanup effort, with rolloff, to support postcard notified residents abutting the alley.
7. New computer system - Permits Plus replacement
W believes that the money for the Permits Plus replacement computer system is not in the FY15-16 budget. The RFP is ready to go. Use of Permits Plus will continue. (Confirmed by Ernie Duarte on 7-2-15)
8. Data cleanup - two pending cases from 2010
A summer intern has helped with the backlog of filing and case updating. CE is slowly making progress on this issue. They do not want to move garbage records into the new system.
9. Field technology - grant possibilities? - smartphone app?
CE inspectors now have City supplied smartphones which they are now using to advantage in the field (snapping pictures, searching information from the field rather than back in the office). Some enterprising inspectors are using an app that allows entering a set of addresses and figuring the most efficient route.

10. CE process improvement - Tim Quinn's suggestions - Streamlining opportunities?
W says that Quinn was going to focus on CSR functions but never got started before he left. W has been making small changes such as a redesigned NOV form that is more efficient to process and the use of a "complete" code by inspectors rather than the more labor intensive "compliant" code. The "complete" code allows managers to have a better handle on inspector workloads. CSRs change complete to compliant at a later date. W also mentioned improvements possible in the electronic scanning and storage process used in the office.
11. Use of volunteers
I ask W about the intern experience he had and whether a volunteer might work along similar lines. He thought that starting slowly, with the right person on a limited basis, might work. Editing access to Permits Plus might be a problem for City I.T. from a security aspect. Worth pursuing.
12. Chronic problem properties - direct to citation for repeat offenders
W will look at direct-to-citation for repeat offenders. He is very much focused on minimizing the number of trips his inspectors are taking. Cutting out one or two trips per case is very attractive to W.
13. City Attorney Office use of notice of owner responsibility, confrontational meetings, etc.
W advises that the landlord accountability program the City has had for a number of years is still running. W attends monthly meetings where the City Attorney's Office (Chris Avery) and TPD are the main players. They focus on high crime, multifamily locations. I told W that we are interested in getting him the ability to refer very select cases of chronic violation for attorney intervention.
14. Property owner education
If the new City Community Media Center gets up and running, there may be the possibility of creating CE YouTube segments that NAs can link to in their newsletters or emails to residents.
15. Involving fiduciary agents and property management personnel
Out of town chronic problem property owners may be reviewed for the presence of a local agent as required by law. The agent can then be pursued.
16. Routing software - efficient routes
Smartphone apps may provide a no cost method for widespread use by CE inspectors.
17. Time lags
Cutting out trips should be beneficial to both CE operations and to earlier compliance in neighborhoods
18. Code violation "red tag" to be posted after criteria have been met
Another possibility – will take some work
19. CE codes and practices in other jurisdictions
Useful to review for new ideas
20. TRRG-CE - a TRRG Working Group focusing on working with City Code Enforcement toward more efficient and effective code compliance
W welcomes our group, will visit when invited and looks forward to collaboration (if he remains as Administrator, with Duarte and Ortega support).

Notes by D. S. Ijams