BUILDING DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT

WHAT’S YOUR GAME PLAN?

COCM SPRING CONFERENCE
April 29, 2016
CLASS TITLE: Building Department Management

PROGRAM APPROVAL: 18219

HOURS APPROVED: 2 Administrative (All)
2 Communication (All)

SCOTT COPE INSTRUCTOR: #1808

LOCATION: Holland, Michigan

DATE: April 29, 2016
What are we going to cover?

- Developing a game plan
  - Vision: What are we striving for
  - Purpose: What we do and why we do it
  - Direction: Focus on what we need to do
  - Guiding Principles: How we do it
- Leadership
- Personnel
- Operations
- Workload
- Professional Development
What are we going to cover?

- Customer Expectations
  - Consistency
  - A “Partnership Mentality”
- Track What & How You’re Doing (Reports)
- Key Relationships
- Politics
- Budget
- Emergency Operations
- Promoting the Building Department
- Pulling it all together
City of Rochester Hills Building Department

OUR COMMITMENT

YOUR LIFE MATTERS TO US

Building Division

Ordinance Division

Facilities Division

Life Safety

Quality of Life

Life- Clean & Comfortable
OUR VISION

To be the best Building Department in the eyes of our customers and our peers.
Our mission is to partner with our customers to ensure safety in all buildings; to assist our residents and business owners in maintaining and enjoying safe buildings and properties; to provide a well maintained, clean, and comfortable environment for our residents, visitors and employees; to ensure Rochester Hills continues to be the preeminent place to live, work and raise a family.
City of Rochester Hills Building Department

OUR GUIDE

- Be a helpful partner.
- Apply codes and ordinances in a practical, professional, consistent and fair manner.
- Keep our customers informed.
- Look at challenges from a different perspective.
Focus on what is important and what really matters.

Provide clear and concise communication.

Keep projects moving forward and strive to meet our customer’s schedules.

Develop a friendly and cooperative relationship with our customers.
Respond quickly to matters that are urgent to our customers.

Coordinate and involve all parties in the process.

Earn the respect of our customers and peers.

Continually evaluate our procedures and processes to search for a better way.

Implement new technologies that will improve our customer’s experience.
We believe:

- In always doing what is right.
- Honesty is the best policy.
- In treating others how they would like to be treated.
We believe:

- In going above and beyond to provide assistance to our customers and fellow employees in an effort to exceed their expectations.
- In working together and helping each other get the job done.
We believe:

- In being open to new ideas.
- In showing consideration and appreciation to others.
- Professional growth and networking are integral to our continued improvement.
- In holding ourselves to a higher standard.
LEADERSHIP

Things to Remember:

- As leaders we are only successful when those we are leading are successful
- If we work to remove obstacles and give clear directions and expectations we can all be successful
- Your actions speak louder than your words
- Believe in your staff
- Reinforce the positive
- Address the negative
LEADERSHIP

Things to remember:

- Be a good listener
- Lead with a positive attitude
- Keep your staff informed
- Leaders need good communication skills
- Provide recognition for good work
- Know what is important
- Develop key relationships that will help you in your job
- You need to challenge people
LEADERSHIP

Things to remember:

- Understand the needs and desires of your staff
- Support your staff, fight for their needs and interests
- Trust staff with new responsibilities
- You must be confident, competent, and caring
- You earn credibility through your actions
- Use politics as needed to support staff and accomplish your goals
- Acknowledge the expertise of others
Why didn’t the assignment you gave go as planned?

- The 1st place to look is yourself
  - Good clear communication is the key
- They don’t know what they were supposed to do
- They don’t know how to do it
- They don’t know why they are doing it (big picture)
- There are obstacles beyond their control
- They do not think it will work
Why didn’t the assignment you gave go as planned?

- They think their way is better
- They think there is something more important
- There is no positive consequence
- There is a negative consequence
- Personal limits
- No one could do it
What do you expect of them?
- Job expectations
- Continued professional growth
- Provide clear direction
- What they need to do (checklists)
- How you expect them to do it (foundation)
BUILDING INSPECTOR JOB EXPECTATIONS

- Be in by 8:00 a.m.
- Be available for calls and questions between 8-9 a.m.
- Complete all inspections scheduled each day. Notify supervisor when this is not possible.
- Lunch and breaks when you feel they are least disruptive to your day.
- If all work is completed before 4:30, please get with your supervisor to discuss other projects.
- Normal work hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Establish and maintain a positive, courteous, effective working relationship with co-workers, with an emphasis on teamwork.

Provide prompt, courteous, effective customer service to all city workers, department staff, and the general public.

Maintain a professional demeanor in the routine performance of the work, as well as under difficult situations.

Follow our Building Department Plan

Let us know what you think. You are a valuable part of this department with many experiences that can help all of us.

Most importantly, have fun and make work enjoyable.
PERSONNEL

- Accountability
  - Personal communication meetings
    - For yourself and your staff
- Hiring
  - Qualifications/Training
- Discipline
  - Let them make the choice
Discuss:

- Purpose of meeting
- Strengths and areas to improve
- What challenges do you have in your job?
- Job satisfaction
  - Do you enjoy your job?
  - Is it meeting your expectations?
  - What do you wish you could change?
  - What is your favorite part of your job?
  - What do you enjoy about working here?
  - What do you find frustrating about working here?
  - What do you find rewarding about your job?
Discuss:

- What you expect from us as your supervisors?
- How are we doing?
- How can we improve?
- Our Building Department Plan
  - The part you play in our success
- Goals for the coming year

It’s all about listening and doing all we can to help each person be the best that they can be.
How do we get it all done?
- Focus on what is important and what really matters
- Tracking your progress

Identify your priorities
- Inspections
- Plan Review
- Complaints
- Old permits

Use your resources
- Part time staff
- Full time staff
- Contract employees
- Cross training
- Interlocal agreement with neighboring communities
WORKLOAD

- Give your staff the tools they need
  - Training
  - Code books and standards
  - References
  - Tape measure, flash light, camera, level, safety equipment, testers, and other equipment needed to perform their job
- Make sure everyone is pulling their own weight
  - No slackers allowed
- Know your limits and the limits of your staff
  - Use professionals if needed
    - Special Inspections
OPERATIONS

Permit Process

- Customer Service Staff
  - Qualifications/Training (1st contact)
- Procedures
  - Consistency
- Type of Permits Available
  - Regular Projects
  - Expedited
    - Residential (48 hours)
      - Wood Decks, Basement Finish, Accessory Structures, Above Ground Pools
    - Commercial (5 Days)
    - Phased: Foundation, Steel, Shell etc..
- Service Goals
- Quality Control
Plan Review Process

- Plan Review Staff
  - Qualifications/Training
- Procedures
- Checklists
  - Consistency
- Communication
  - How? Email, phone, Letter, Meetings
- Pre Plan Review Meetings
- Plan Review Meetings (Contractor, Architect, Owner)
- Service Goals
- Quality Control
Inspection Process

- Inspection Staff
  - Qualifications/Training
- Procedures
- Checklists
  - Consistency
- Types of Inspections
  - Footing, Sand, Rough, Insulation, Final
  - Special Inspections
  - Change of Occupancy
  - Expired Permits
- Communication
  - How? Email, phone, Letter, Meetings
  - Pre Construction Review Meetings
  - Field meeting
- Service Goals
- Quality Control
We all need it
- Get the dollars in the budget
- ICC Certifications
- Act 54 training
- Learn from each other
- Learn the code both residential and commercial
- Communication Skills are essential
  - Written and verbal
- Being professional is about attitude, character, and integrity
CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

- What are they? You need to know
- How well are you doing in their eyes?
  - Surveys, calls, field visits, AIA, HBA, SEAMi
- Consistency
- Partnership Mentality (The Building enforcement game has changed)
  - Be a helpful resource in the construction process
  - View the process from your customers perspective
    - Quality product
    - Completed on time
    - Within budget
CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

- Keep the project moving
- Allow construction without permits
- Phased permits
- Expedited permits
- Permit Conditions
- Partial inspections/onsite meetings/resolve concerns quickly
- Be responsive
  - Return phone calls
  - Be there when they need you
How will your decisions make you feel?
Remember...
Stupid hurts.
*Please be careful when you put revision clouds on your drawings, some of the contractors do not understand.*
REPORTS

Track What and How You Are Doing

- Weekly Plan Review Status
- Monthly Report
- Quarterly Report
KEY RELATIONSHIPS

- Your staff
  - You need them
  - They need you
- Your peers
  - Inside your organization
  - Other Department Heads/Inspectors/Plan Reviewers
  - Outside your organization
    - COCM members
    - Your local chapter members
    - ICC members
KEY RELATIONSHIPS

- Your boss
  - Do they know what you do?
  - Do they support you?
- Your Board/Commission/Council
  - Do they know what you do?
  - Do they support you?
- Your Customers/Residents
- Anyone else who can help you do your job?
KEY RELATIONSHIPS

YOUR STAFF

- They do the work
- Personal communication meetings
  - Understand their values, expectations, needs, wants, desires and goals
    - Help them attain them
- Let them know you care
- If they succeed, you succeed
KEY RELATIONSHIPS

YOUR PEERS—inside and outside

- Help you negotiate internal and external politics
- Keep you in the know so you are prepared
- Share your challenges and successes
- Help you with problems
- Provide support
KEY RELATIONSHIPS

YOUR BOSS

- They can get you the things you need!
- Do they know what you do?
- Do they know the value of what your department does?
KEY RELATIONSHIPS

YOUR BOARD/COMMISSION/COUNCIL

- They can get you the things you need!
- Do they know what you do?
- Do they know the value of what your department does?
KEY RELATIONSHIPS

YOUR CUSTOMERS/RESIDENTS

- They are who you serve
- Without them they do not need us
No way !!!!!

Maintain your integrity

Know what you want and why

Find out who can help you get what you need

Figure out what you need to get what you want
Getting support of key leaders

- Building trust
  - Up front and honest
  - Flexible when you can
  - Firm when needed
- Educate
- Quick to respond
- Develop key relationships
- Our job is to make them look good
Know how the politics work
  - Who knows who

Educate leaders
  - Have workshop with Council/Boards
  - Building Department part of public safety
  - Need to promote Building Department
  - Open house
Communication

- Keep them informed good and bad
- Let them know your side first
- Be careful what you say
- Tell boss about any problem
- Weekly report to the boss
- Keep your boss in the loop
- Staff to keep you in the loop
- Be proactive: find it before they do
- Respond quickly to concerns
Know when the fight is worth fighting
Be aware of the challenges in our industry
  - Inconsistency
  - Construction delays
  - We are the easy one to blame
Our community is safer because of our building department
Look at bigger picture
  - How do we make an impact
    - Through the MML and the State of Michigan
BUDGETS: Show me the money

- See politics 😊
- Projecting revenues and expenses
- Maintaining staff levels
  - Use your resources
BUDGETS: Show me the money

- Training budget: How to get more?
- Are your fees up to date?
- Performance Measures
  - Number of Plan reviews, inspections, permits, phone calls, complaints, service goals
  - Track how you are doing with service goals
Who is your Emergency Operations Manager?

- Let them know your part
- Damage Assessment
- Post Disaster Plan
- Recovery Process
- Developing a Plan
  - Oakland County Building OfficialS
  - Generic plan available
  - Make it your own
PROMOTING THE BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Why?

- Because Building Safety is an essential part of Public Safety.
- We need our stakeholders (residents, business owners, our boss, and political leaders) to understand the value and importance of what we do.
PROMOTING THE BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Why?

- To improve our image
  - Police
  - Fire
  - Building
Why?

- We need to change the public’s perception from unfriendly, unreasonable, overbearing, and inflexible; to courteous, helpful, understanding, and fair.
PROMOTING THE BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Why?

- To build our customers trust, respect, and confidence in us and the value of what we do

- Our survival and success depends on our stakeholders
  - We have a product to sell
  - Our customers need to find value in that product
Why?

- We need to change our paradigm from an “Enforcement Mentality” to a “Partnership Mentality”
  - The rules of the game have changed and we need to adapt
PROMOTING THE BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Why?

- This is important to all of us with both large and small departments
- We are all in this together
- We need to be innocent until proven guilty
- Our success depends on each other
What can you do?

- Commit yourself to continued professional growth
  - ICC Certifications
  - Communication classes
- Start with the little things
  - Good communication
  - Be responsive
  - Focus on professionalism
What can you do?

- Develop a “Partnership Mentality”
- Educate your boss, board/council members, residents, and customers
  - Building Safety Month
- Improve your website
- Improve your ISO rating
- Apply for IAS building department accreditation
QUICK RECAP

- Develop a Game Plan
  - Vision, purpose, guide, foundation
- Develop your LEADERSHIP skills
  - We are only successful when those we lead are successful
- Personnel
  - Expectations, clear direction, accountability
  - Everyone pulls their own weight
PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

QUICK RECAP

- Operations
  - What can you do to improve?
- Workload
  - Use your resources
- Customer Expectations
  - What are they?
  - Are you meeting them?
- Key Relationships
  - You need them to do your job
Pulling It All Together

QUICK RECAP

- Politics
  - You need to know how to play the game
- Budget
  - Getting the dollars you need
- Promoting the Building Department
  - They need to know the value of what you do
Pulling It All Together

- HOLY MOLY.....DO I REALLY NEED TO DO ALL THAT?
- YOU’RE NOT ALONE
  - Take it one step at a time
  - Use your resources
    - Peers/ Colleagues
    - www.rochesterhills.org
- YES, IT REALLY WORKS!
What Are You Going To Do?

As a Building Official
As a Building Inspector
As a Plan Reviewer

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE !!!!!!!
QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION

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