



MINUTES
Ad Hoc LADBS Policies Committee Meeting
Wednesday, August 3, 2022, 3:30 PM-4:30 PM

Call to Order and Roll Call: Stella Grey, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

7 Present: Robin Greenberg, Stella Grey, Ellen Evans, Maureen Levinson, Nickie Miner, Stephanie Savage, Bob Schlesinger,

4 Absent: Shawn Bayliss, Bobby Kwan, Michael Schweitzer, Leslie Weisberg

1. **Motion:** Approve proposed August 3, 2022, Ad Hoc LADBS Policies Committee meeting Agenda. **Moved** by Bob Schlesinger; **seconded** by Maureen Levinson; **7/0/0 passed**

2. **Motion:** Approve July 7, 2022, Ad Hoc LADBS Policies Committee meeting minutes. **Moved** by Robin Greenberg; **seconded** by Nickie Miner; **5/0/2 passed**.

3. **General Public Comments**

- Don Loze: Suggested that each request for remedial grading should be reviewed by the City as a discretionary request and therefore should also be a subject for review by NC PLU Committees.
- Lionel Mares: expressed concern re wildlife and requested that we support the proposed Wildlife Ordinance.

4. **Discussion:**

No discussion under this agenda item

5. **Discussion:**

The following issues were discussed:

- Haul route hearings precede plan check review of grading plans. Applicants often request haul routes for "approximate" export volumes that exceed BHO allowance and therefore, require a discretionary entitlement.

Q1: Should BBSC be made aware of BHO requirements? Should the approval of export volumes in excess of BHO be considered a code violation?

Q2: Should all projects undergo at least a preliminary review of grading plans before applying for a haul route? This will expose a need for obtaining a discretionary entitlement for actual export volumes. If the entitlement is approved by the Planning Department, the project then can apply for a haul route.

Q3: Many projects re-use cut soil as a fill. Sometimes the size of the lot and the structure layout prevent the project from temporary stockpiling soil on its lot. Yet in the last five

years we have not seen a single project that accounted for import of previously exported soil in its calculations for the haul route. Does the DBS plan check manual address this?

- We find irregularities with permit expirations for projects in hillside. Governing regulations (LAMC Sec. 98.0602(a); Assembly Bill 2913; LAMC Sec. 98.0605; LAMC Sec. 106.4.4.3) are not always followed:

- Permits are reactivated the day after they have expired, often by the same inspector who expired them.
- Permits remain active when they must expire per LAMC (COVID-related special orders excluded).
- In the last three years, we worked with Devin Myrick and Brian Hauff to expire very old inactive permits. To do it, we had to manually sift through the ZIMAS website, looking for each permit that exceeded time limits of being inactive.
- We discovered a project with permits being finalized several years ago, the structure being occupied but without ever receiving a Certificate of Occupancy.
- We recently discovered a house that has been under construction for 10 years and yet not finished, creating an eyesore for the neighbors.

Q1: Is it possible to update PCIS software to automatically generate alerts for various events such as “permit expiration date approaching”, “duration of the project exceeding average duration of construction” (based on project size?), “CofO not being issued one year after all permits were finalized”, etc.

Q2: How can the process of permit expiration/reactivation be made transparent?

- We suggest that permit extension for projects larger than 5000 square feet and/or with any discretionary requests to be a transparent process that includes proper notification of interested parties and public hearings.
- Any claim of technical difficulties and financial hardship should be thoroughly substantiated (bank statements, loan documents, etc.) and redacted documents be available to the public via ZIMAS.
- Should permit re-activation for expired permits be prohibited if an applicant missed all opportunities for renewing permits?

Q3: Is it possible to develop a list of tangible criteria for determining a degree of project completion and apply these criteria when determining whether a project is 75% completed.

- Asbestos is a known carcinogen. South Coast AQMD was given the authority by EPA to enforce the federal asbestos regulations that prevent asbestos emission from emanating during building renovation and demolition. However, demolition permits are issued without coordination with South Coast AQMD and asbestos clearance is not always obtained when required per Rule 1403. Just recently two demolition projects in our area were temporarily stopped by AQMD.

We think that, when it comes to health and safety of workers, building inspectors and residents, it is reasonable to request that a proof of asbestos clearance from AQMD has been obtained prior to issuance of permits for remodel or demolition.

Q1: Could this be resolved internally by the department? Could a line item be added to the plan-check checklist, similarly to clearances from Public Works and other departments?

- Many lots in our area, especially those that have not been previously developed, are home for protected trees and shrubs.

https://www.ladbs.org/docs/default-source/publications/misc-publications/clearance-handbook.pdf?sfvrsn=4d7be453_41 lists the following clearances on page 33 of the document:

- Disturb/Remove Protected Trees in private property
- New/alter driveways and curb
- New/alter sidewalks
- New/alter parkway

We recently discovered that plan checkers do not fully understand the difference between them plus they completely rely on the integrity of an applicant to declare it.

As we have recently learned, not every applicant possesses a necessary degree of integrity.

Q1: Could the “Disturb/Remove Protected Trees in private property” clearance be made mandatory for all projects in Hillside areas?

Don Loze suggested the following:

- No grading permit should be issued before the entire project is reviewed;
- Each project at the very inception shall submit a proposed construction schedule and acquire a completion bond to assure that the proposed timeline has been adhered to.

Maureen Levinson suggested and Devin Myrick agreed that some projects were put on hold and permits expired because of construction cost escalation that became a burden for developers.

6. Discussion:

This item has been continued.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:45 PM.

Next meeting date TBD