

MINUTES OF WORKSHOP FOR DISCUSSION OF AN
ANNUAL CYCLED INSPECTION PROGRAM FOR ALL CITY
REAL ESTATE PROPERTIES
JANUARY 7, 2011 – 6:00 P.M.

Wil Corcoran of Corcoran Consulting Associates, Inc. said their general philosophy in dealing with assessing is to go light. In 2009 their appraisal staff reviewed every property as part of the certification revaluation. The one remaining component that the City has yet to enact is the City-wide data collection process. It has been over 18 years since the City has visited every property to measure and inspect all buildings in the City and yet we are required to do so every 5 years.

Mr. Corcoran clarified that they do inspections under the following circumstances:

- A building permit is issued,
- An abatement request is in place,
- A sale has occurred, or
- A request from a taxpayer expressing their wish to have an appraiser to verify the record.

Mr. Corcoran said they are suggesting that the City institute a “cycled” inspection program at this time, where the inspections on the balance of properties are spread out over a five-year period. This would entail the following activities:

Data Collection Process:

- The City will be broken down geographically into 4 residential areas.
- The 4 areas will be scheduled for inspection years 1 through 4.
- Before beginning, taxpayers will be notified by the City of an impending visit by a staff appraisal data collector and will include an explanation as to why this will occur.
- By map, collectors will visit each property slated for inspection. Upon arrival, they will:
 1. Identify themselves and attempt to contact a person at the house.
 2. If contact is made, a request for a quick view of the interior of the house be performed.
 3. If allowed, the inspector will verify or modify data on the record so that the interior data is accurate.
 4. The collector will measure all buildings and verify or correct the location and dimensions as well as the condition of all buildings for the City’s record.
 5. If no one is home, the collector will proceed to measure all buildings and verify or correct the location and dimensions as well as the condition of all buildings.
 6. If no one is home, upon completion of measuring and recording building dimensions, the collector will leave a notice at the property advising the

occupant of our visit and leave a telephone number to call the Assessor's Office to schedule an appointment for interior inspection at the taxpayers' convenience.

- The assessing clerk will receive calls from taxpayers scheduling "call-back" interior inspections and the appraisal personnel shall conduct the interior inspections in the manner described above.
- Changed data coming in from the field will be recorded in the assessing system.
- In the 5th year, all commercial and industrial properties will be measured and inspected.
 1. There will be notices mailed to commercial/industrial property owners, however, if the property is operational, interior inspections will occur upon arrival of the commercial data collector.
 2. Call-back letters will be mailed to commercial properties found vacant or where interior inspections were not allowed upon arrival of the data collector.

Data Collection/Call-back Costs: Costs for Data Collections of 750 properties, including call-back inspections, are projected at \$28,000 for the first year.

Data Entry Costs: Ordinarily, data being collected in the field would be entered into the CAMA System by the assessing clerk. However, given the assessing office shares their clerk with the Code Enforcement Office, this may not be a viable option. Should the assessors be required to key changed data, the cost would be \$5,200.

Postage Costs: Costs for postage and mailings will be borne by the City. As estimate of \$500 for initial notices of impending inspections, and notices to those who do not respond for a call-back inspection are projected.

The City Manager said this cycled program would cost about \$33,000 per year and would be overseen by the State of NH Department of Revenue Administration and their Assessing Standards Board.

The City Manager indicated the Board of Assessors are knowledgeable about this type of program and are supportive of it.

Mayor Soldati questioned if the last time there was a full-blown measure and inspection was over 18 years ago. He thought we were supposed to do that every 5 years. His understanding of this program is that we would be inspecting one fourth of the properties per year over a period of four years, and commercial properties during the fifth year, and that we would continue with this cycle.

Mr. Corcoran replied in the affirmative to all Mayor Soldati's questions.

Councilor Watman said we are required to do this sort of thing in some method or other, and we should be doing it because, although no one wants to be paying property taxes, no

one else wants someone to be paying less than they should be. We all know of some people who have made improvements to their property and not secured building permits, therefore there is no way to know that the value of their home has increased. Also some people, over the years, have property that has degraded because they haven't been able to keep up with improvements. At both ends, you want to be fair about it.

Councilor Watman said instead of paying \$170,000 in one tax year, we will be spending about \$34,000 per year for five years. This will be easier to plan for and is the smoothest way to decrease the financial burden on people in any given year.

Mr. Corcoran said it will be easier operationally also.

Councilor Tapscott asked how far in advance the property owners are notified about an inspection.

Mr. Corcoran replied they try to do the inspections in good weather, and before the tax bills are due to go out. They like to give the property owners a couple of months notice.

Councilor Tapscott asked the City Manager where the funding for this project will be coming from.

The City Manager replied the first year would cost approximately \$34,000. We do have a revaluation fund and would probably ask the Council to re-appropriate the \$34,000 to cover this. In the future it would be part of the budgeting process.

Councilor Witham asked if it could cost more than \$34,000 in future years.

The City Manager replied that is a possibility, particularly when they inspect commercial properties.

Mayor Soldati thanked Mr. Corcoran for the information.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane M. DuBois, City Clerk

