

2014

Annual

Building & Zoning Report

February 27, 2015

Prepared by the Building and Zoning Department and submitted by:

Frederic D. Wyss Jr., RBO, C.F.M., Building Commissioner

CITY OF WILLOUGHBY HILLS

35405 CHARDON ROAD
WILLOUGHBY HILLS, OHIO 44094
OFFICE: 440-975-3550
FAX: 440-918-8749

2014 ANNUAL BUILDING & ZONING REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND ZONING

Frederic D. Wyss Jr. R.B.O., C.F.M.

Diana McCann

Building Commissioner

Building Department Clerk / Secretary

Building & Zoning Inspector

Service Department Clerk/Secretary

Zoning & Floodplain Administrator

Assisted By

Planning Commission-Architectural Board of Review

*Charlotte Schryer, Chairman

Katie Lloyd, Clerk

* Christopher Smith elected Chairman upon Charlotte Schryer stepping down January 2015

Board of Zoning Appeals

Frank Cihula, Chairman

Katie Lloyd, Clerk

City Engineering

Pietro A. DiFranco, P.E., City Engineer

Daniel J. Collins, P.E., Assist. City Engineer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 1Personnel

Page 2.....General Information

Page 3.....Finances

Page 4&5.....New Business & Goals for 2014

Page 6&7.....2014 General Summery

2014 Annual Building & Zoning Report

PERSONNEL

For the year 2014, there were a total of five (5) employees who served the Building and Zoning Department, and all five are currently paid under the Building Department Budget. Two of the five are independent contract inspectors. The Building Commissioner (salaried employee) and Department Clerk (hourly employee) are full-time. BZA and PC Clerk positions are part-time hourly. The Department Clerk has trained and serves the service department as well.

Frederic D. Wyss Jr. – Building Commissioner, Residential Building & Zoning Inspector Ohio Board of Building Standards Certified Residential Building Official, and a Certified Floodplain Manager by the Association of State Floodplain Managers, INC.

Diana McCann –Department Clerk, Notary Public, service secretary

David Menn – Electrical Safety Inspector & fully certified to do additional inspections Also serves as back-up Residential Building Official (Part-time Contractor 2004 to present)

Charles E. Pinkerman – Back-up Electrical Safety Inspector, Mr. Pinkerman like Dave Menn is also certified as a Residential Building Official and can serve as back-up.

Katie Lloyd – Planning Commission/ABR Clerk (May 16, 2007 to present) BZA Clerk February 2014

* Katie Lloyd accepted the duties as Clerk for the BZA as of Joan Motuza's Retirement

The City of Willoughby Hills Building Department would like to recognize and thank Joan Motuza for her many years of service to the city. Joan served as clerk for Planning Commission and Architectural Board of Review and was Board of Zoning Appeals clerk twice from 1996 to 2006 and from 2008 to 2014.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- The Building and Zoning Department's office hours remain 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The office is closed during lunch hour 12:00 to 1:00 each day. The Building Commissioner is often available during lunch hour to facilitate permit requests.
- The Department provides anyone coming to the office during these hours an opportunity to obtain building and zoning information, information on new construction projects, apply for the Planning and Zoning Commission and Architectural Board of Review, obtain building and zoning permits, register as a contractor, or obtain a Customary Home Occupation permit. Since the window serves the public for service matters, inquiries for that purpose are also addressed throughout the day.
- The Building Commissioner office hours vary according to needs. The Building Commissioner is available at all times during normal business hours either in the office or by phone. Since there is no back-up for the service/building clerk the Building Commissioner also serves in that capacity when the clerk is out sick or on vacation.
- Inspections are performed by the Building Commissioner Monday - Friday during normal business hours and upon special request before 8:00 a.m. or after 4:30 p.m. The Electrical Safety Inspector is available Monday - Friday at 4:30 and 5:00 p.m. The ESI serves as back-up for the Commissioner while on vacation.
- The Department Clerk schedules appointments for inspections, prepares reports to Ohio Board of Building Standards, ICC Reports, monthly record keeping, and daily permit issuing. In addition to duties in the building department the Clerk schedules sewer inspections, dye tests, does all P.O.s for both the service department and the building department and serves the Street Superintendent, service employees, Building Commissioner, and other city officials as needed.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES OF THE BUILDING DEPARTMENT

2014 PERMITS

- **448 building permits were issued. 425 in 2013.**
- **11 new permits for sanitary sewer connections. 23 in 2013**
- **12 new single family homes. 7 in 2013 (most since 2010)**
- **6 additions to existing homes. 5 in 2013**
- **13 Garages and storage buildings. 2 in 2013**
- **13 commercial zoning permits. 20 in 2013**
- **The remaining 393 permits are from elec., plumb. HVAC, pools, and decks. 368 in 2013**
- **431 Building, Plumbing and HVAC inspections were performed. 363 in 2013**
- **143 Inspections were performed by Dave Menn, Electrical Safety Inspector 82 in 2013**

Department Revenues by Year	2011	2012	2013	2014
Permits	\$47,339.06	\$41,705.64	\$39,262.3	\$50,000.20
BZA Variance Fee	\$200.00	\$300	\$500.00	\$500.00
Engineering/plan review deposits	\$22,129.11	\$33,974.85	\$76,592.74	\$52,620.00 †
Re-Inspection fees	\$80.00	\$120.00	\$80.00	\$90.00
Bookkeeping fees	\$2,796.00	\$3,750.00	\$1,320.00	\$1,290.00*
Home Occupations	\$1,600.00	\$1,825.00	\$1,275.00	\$1,050.00
Contractor Registration	\$31,150.00	\$31,950.00	\$30,425.00	\$31,975.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$105,294.17	\$113,214.04	\$149,455.04	\$137,525.20

**Additional revenue was generated in bookkeeping fees not separately receipted from old deposited review fees. Many POs were closed in 2014 that did not have bookkeeping deducted when deposit was collected. No figures were available for this revenue.*

† Although engineering review fees are listed in the revenue stream, they do not go into the general fund and are merely pass through fees to cover our engineering review and paid by the contractor or developer. They are provided for year to year comparison only.

EXPENSES	2011	2012	2013	2014
Office Supplies	\$1,812.85	\$6,066.79	\$1,190.77	\$418.70
Office Equipment	\$0	\$2,532.00	\$1,525.44	\$803.81
Seminars / Training	\$1,322.32	\$929.04	\$599.17	\$1,020.19
Dues, Licenses, etc.	\$180	\$180	\$180.00	\$758.99
Library Supplies	\$0	\$64.95	\$0*	\$0*
State Tax On Permits	\$425.89	\$306.80	\$367.19	\$481.41
Vehicle Maintenance	\$394.30	\$152.06	\$35.22	\$0
Telephone	\$394.30	\$495.00	\$251.00	\$143.87
Contract Inspectors	\$2590.00	\$2,100.00	\$2,450.00	\$4,375.00
Fuel	\$907.47	\$900.00	\$812.06	\$906.75
<i>Totals of these categories</i>	\$7,632.83	\$13,726.64	\$7,410.85	\$8,908.72
New Category included 2014	Salaries and Benefits Paid			\$115,215.48

CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION	2012	2012	2014
REGISTRATIONS	316	335	305

The department has continued the \$25.00 rate to register the last quarter and add \$100.00 for the next full year. *The Building Department is not considered a revenue department but a service to the residents and safety director of the city. Any increased revenue helps balance the expenses of operation.*

*The Board of Building Standards implemented a code book distribution program with the 2013 Building and Residential Code changes. A yearly book distribution and code review training is mandated by the board in Columbus, Ohio each year.

New Business and development

- The Economic Development Director and Zoning Administrator have and continue to work closely together to assist new commercial developers. Zoning changes to accommodate new business have been necessary to allow new business use of existing properties. The new development in the city is listed below:

Commercial:

- Clover Senior Apartments- 113 new senior congregate care apartments at Chagrin North. *Project begun in 2014 expected completion late 2015*
- O'Reilly Auto Parts- West Chardon Rd. *Project completed and open for business 2014*
- Dunkin Donuts project for Bishop Road approved September 2014. *Construction expected to begin March 2015 and open summer 2015*
- American Heritage Motorcycle was approved for the remodeled Sears Hardware Store on Bishop Road. *This was made possible by a zoning change from B-2 to B-3. Opened for business in August 2014*

Residential:

- Maple Valley Subdivision was completed in Fall 2014 *Construction on four new homes nearing completion March 2015*
- Seven (7) new homes were constructed on lots in older established sub-divisions as newer subdivisions have neared fully developed status.

Other residential development:

- The Dodd Rd. Subdivision project at Dodd and Pleasant Valley Rd. proved too costly for the developer due to current storm water standards and the developer declined to continue with the project.
- Other residential development on SOM Center has stalled due to developer resistance to conform to codified conservation development standards.

Without a comprehensive plan to alter rigid zoning use rules requiring zoning use changes by ballot or law suite, developers will seek to go to more development friendly locations. The Charter Review Commission may be willing to visit changes to the City Charter in order to make new development in existing residential land masses more feasible and cost effective. This could encourage the repurposing of vast land areas that are currently underdeveloped or restricted to only certain zoning uses.

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Commercial Development

- Areas for new commercial development are limited and there remains a need to repurpose old obsolete retail space at the Shoppes of Willoughby Hills (Loehmans Plaza). After successful redevelopment of the two Classic Auto Dealerships at 91 and Interstate 90, the Route 91 corridor remains restricted from further commercial development due to mapped zoning uses. The average age of the homes along SOM Center between Interstate 90 and Chardon Rd. is 60+ years old. Most of the lots are multi acre parcels on a very busy commercially viable corridor. The City has had repeated inquiries for commercial development along this stretch. The necessary zoning changes to facilitate this development discourages these pursuits.
- The Clover Senior Apartments at Chagrin North should provide stimulus for our downtown area restaurants and medical offices.
- Dunkin Donuts will begin construction in March and open 70 days later. This may further stimulate growth at our west end.

Our Main Focus-Residential Building Department

- There were eight (8) homes demolished in the city in 2014 clearing the way for redevelopment of parcels that suffered from blight, obsolescence and age. Three homes were torn down in town center between City Hall and SOM. Two of these are properties owned by the city and one is owned by a private developer. Blighted properties on Beech Hills and Rockefeller were torn down and lots cleared for redevelopment. Three more on Chardon, Berkshire Hills and Rockefeller were razed to make way for new residential structures to be occupied in 2015. Several homes on older subdivided and newly subdivided lots are being developed with new homes.
- The MAPLE VALLEY SUBDIVISION is finished and the four homes started in 2014 will be ready for occupancy soon. River's Edge is nearly built out and Pine Valley Subdivision will have its last lot developed this spring. Any undeveloped residential property will require careful design and perhaps conservation techniques. Much of this land is available west of SOM Center where sewers can facilitate more dense development. Zoning flexibility could assist development in that area.
- The twelve (12) new home starts in 2014 should be equaled or surpassed this year. Three new homes have already been approved for construction. Three more are in design phase and four additional lots in Maple Valley Subdivision have been sold.

2014 GENERAL SUMMERY

Building and Zoning Code Violations

- All code violations are addressed on a complaint basis or with respect to building codes on permitted jobs. A great deal of compliance has been attributed to verbal requests and informal letters. Compliance has been increasingly challenging this year as several complaints have lead to final notices and referrals to the prosecutor's office. In addition the law department has been consulted on several occasions which puts an added burden on city resources and distracts valuable time from other important city projects. When new development exposes dilapidated and unsafe structures actions to mitigate those conditions are implemented without the filing of a complaint as necessary.
- Complaints for blighted and nuisance properties will be addressed aggressively in 2015. Several complaints were prosecuted in either Mayor's Court or Willoughby Municipal Court. The foreclosure problem is still lingering but remains manageable.
- The Lake County Land Bank Grant Program is now complete with the last demolished house in Willoughby Hills on Rockefeller Rd. As the land bank sells vacant property it now owns, the program will be self-sustaining with more money available to demo more homes.

Department Organization

The final overhaul of the City's Building records should be nearing completion in 2015. January 2015 the service department constructed a rack for individual rolled files in our new archive closet. Thanks to the assistance of new street superintendent Mark Grubiss, additional shelves will be installed in the back area for additional storage. Individual property files have been completed in the master files and many old plan and permit documents have been transferred to electronic files and copied to disc. All remaining plans and files will be brought over from City Hall during the year.

- All department records will be more accessible and complete. Commercial plans will be organized with current businesses identified and businesses or buildings no longer in existence will be archived.
- A records retention schedule will be completed and approved in 2015
- To facilitate emergency management of flood damage assessment, a master file of all floodplain property structures is now on file in the Building Commissioner's office. The file includes: all property in the 100 yr floodplain organized by street, lists of certified inspectors to help in evaluating damage assessments, damage assessment forms to facilitate initial evaluations, and floodplain and emergency management contact information to assist the department in the case of flood emergencies. *Added to this file in 2014 were Lake County Auditor assessment sheets to facilitate substantial damage assessments in the case of flood disaster on properties mapped as Special Flood Hazard Areas.*

2014 Fee reviews by Mayor Weger per 1331.01

- The Mayor completed a review of building department fees on March 14, 2014 and signed off on proposed changes submitted by the Building Commissioner. Most fees remained unchanged. The addition of two plan review fees were added after review of other neighboring department's practices. The added fees were \$50.50 review for accessory structures and additions less than 1250 sq. ft. and \$101.00 for single family homes and additions more than 1250 sq. ft.
- The new City Engineers continue to be a welcome change. Pete DiFranco and Dan Collins both work well with the city staff. Kevin Trepal joins Dan as an additional Assistant to Pete and site plan reviews are done with in house engineers as needed. Pete and Dan provide detailed requests for plan review deposits and Pete has devised a new electronic transmission of plans that streamlines the review process for the builders and developers. We very seldom require additional fee deposits for our reviews and when we do they are always justified. It has been a welcome change to be able to refund excess deposits. Mayor Weger needs to be credited with one of his most important decisions of his tenure when he made the change to Richard L. Bowen & Associates Inc.

SUMMARY OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BUILDING COMMISSIONER

As Building Commissioner, Frederic D. Wyss Jr. is the head of the Building Department, a Certified Residential Department. All commercial and residential zoning concerns are also handled by the Building Commissioner. For individual job descriptions and tasks please reference the 2013 report. We shall decline from restating them here.

SUMMARY OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT CLERK

As Building Department Clerk, Diana McCann is the face and voice of the Department in the absence of the Commissioner. In addition to these duties she also serves as service department office manager assisting the Street Superintendent. For individual duties please see the 2013 report.

The building department staff serves at the pleasure of the Mayor, City Council, and the residents of Willoughby Hills. We appreciate our employment and look forward to serve in the coming years.

Respectfully Submitted February 27, 2015 by Fred Wyss, Building Commissioner