

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
November 7, 2023

City Commission Work Session
Civic Center, Gibson Room 212

Mayor Kelly presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 PM

CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Kelly, Susan Wolff, Joe McKenney, Eric Hinebauch and Rick Tryon.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Greg Doyon; City Attorney David Dennis; Finance Director Melissa Kinzler and Grant Administrator Tom Hazen; Public Works Director Chris Gaub, City Engineer Jesse Patton and Development Review Coordinator Mark Juras; Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry; Park and Recreation Director Steve Herrig; Municipal Court Judge Steve Bolstad and Court Supervisor Morgan Medvec; Fire Marshal Mike McIntosh; Library Director Susie McIntyre; Police Captain Rob Moccasin; and, Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea.

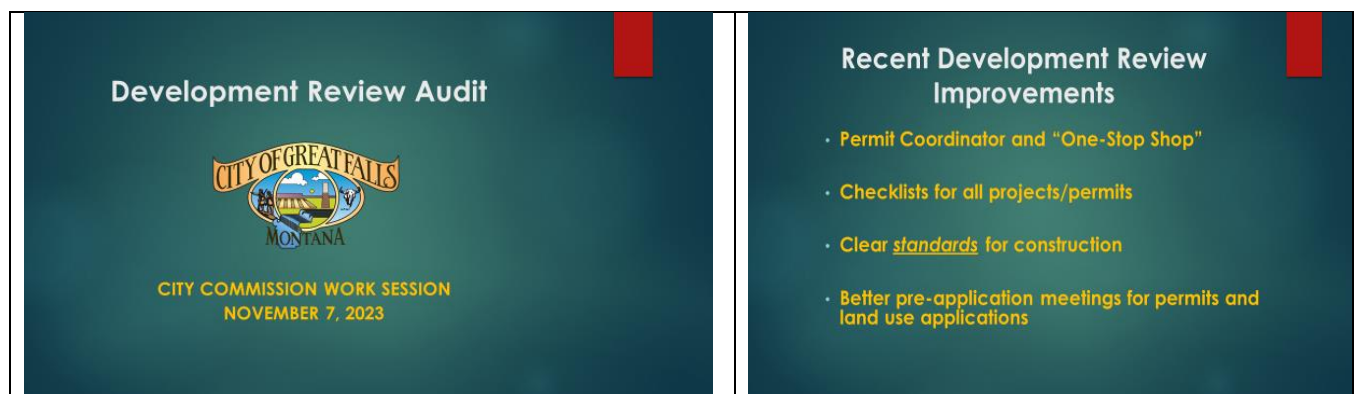
PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

1. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AUDIT.

Public Works Director Chris Gaub explained that the goals of the audit are to have a healthy development review program, encourage development so that the City can continue to be more vibrant, and to have more options and opportunities. To do this, developers and ratepayers need to be successful. The City needs to have a consistent process, be transparent with developers, and needs to protect ratepayers because of how much infrastructure there is. He commented that he supports a continuous process improvement (CPI) model.

Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry and Public Works Development Review Coordinator Mark Juras reviewed and discussed the following PowerPoint:



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<h3 style="text-align: center;">Internal Improvements</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can we improve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for customer/applicant collaboration to drive improvements. • Full implementation of EnerGov- This allows for online submittals, greater accountability, and a true "one-stop shop" experience. • We're still too reliant on individuals to make up for problems. What happens when they leave??? 	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Internal Improvements</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificates of Occupancy should be more predictable for staff and customers • Every project needs a calendar and <u>deadlines!</u> • <i>The City Promise:</i> If everyone does their part right on the front end, you can deliver your project on time and on budget and have a positive development experience.
<h3 style="text-align: center;">Development Review Audit Listening Session</h3> <p>Our Core Mission for the Audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and prioritize development • Be timely, consistent, but still listen, communicate, and problem solve • Ensure that you know your budget through upfront fees, not rolling costs • If applicants provide complete plan sets that comply with requirements, your process will be straightforward • Cross-train our team so multiple people can help you 	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Development Review Audit Listening Session – What's Next</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 26 – Conducted first Listening Session with the development community • November 7 City Commission Work Session – Similar presentation with input – 5:30 pm – Gibson • November 16 – Listening Session Part 2 (more input) – Gibson Room 9:30 am-11:30 am • November - February 2024 - Smaller listening sessions and work groups for special topics • Spring 2024 – Final report and presentation to Commissioners – We want it to be yours also
	

Planning and Community Development Director Cherry explained that a permit processing software working effectively is how to achieve a one-stop shop, have total transparency, and track the entire application process. EnerGov is a permit processing software that enables citizens to apply for applications for projects on line; however, the customer-facing component, which allows applicants to apply on line and for City staff to have communication with them, has not been able to be deployed. EnerGov was to be implemented right when COVID began; however, there was some employee turnover because of deficiencies being able to educate employees properly on the administration of it. He anticipates that EnerGov should be fully implemented by the end of 2024.

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Public Works Development Review Coordinator Mark Juras explained that the first Development Review Audit Listening Session was held on October 26, 2023 and approximately eight members from the development community attended to discuss topics of concern. There will be a second listening session on November 16, 2023 and will continue into 2024.

Commissioner Wolff inquired about additional strategies that could be used to encourage more of the development community to attend the listening sessions.

Public Works Director Cherry responded that Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Shane Etzwiler provided assistance to City staff with preparing a draft applicant survey. There has also been continued conversations about the Growth Policy anytime Staff meets with developers.

Commissioner McKenney inquired about speeding up the design review process and if there is proper staffing to carry out the Development Review Audit Action Plan.

Planning and Community Development Director Cherry responded that the process has to meet statutory requirements. The process is thorough because of public and Neighborhood Council participation. It is not just about making the process faster, but also making sure that the process upholds what is laid out in the Growth Policy in the zoning ordinance. He further responded that sometimes it is not about adding personnel and is about working smarter and utilizing the tools correctly that City staff currently has.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that the Growth Policy, Development Review Audit and implementing EnerGov are Planning and Community Development Director Cherry's top priorities. EnerGov software should expedite the permitting process and full implementation. The success of EnerGov also necessitates the Planning and Community Development Department to modernize and digitalize other systems in order for it to be truly successful.

Commissioner Tryon inquired how the results of EnerGov would be measured.

Planning and Community Development Director Cherry responded that once fully implemented, EnerGov will allow for greater accountability by determining when a permit was submitted, issued and granted. He added that the goal is to empower City staff at all levels during the design review process to find solutions and work out conflicts.

Public Works Director Gaub added that what Planning and Community Director Cherry explained is the CPI model that he referred to earlier and the listening sessions would continue to provide feedback from the development community.

Commissioner Hinebauch received clarification that a robust training on EnerGov would be provided to City staff. Once EnerGov is fully implemented, the software would provide applicants with an anticipated timeline.

Mayor Kelly inquired about the weakness areas of the Development Review Audit Action Plan. He further inquired if there has been any coordinating with the development communities and other cities.

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Planning and Community Development Director Cherry responded that there is an organization called the American Planning Association. In addition, planning directors throughout the State can have discussions via phone conference every other month. Reaching out to other communities to get their take on best practices could also be built into the audit.

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that a draft EMS transportation contract update will be a topic for the November 21, 2023 work session. A Rec/Aquatic Center progress update will be a topic for the December 5, 2023 work session. There will not be a formal work session on December 19, 2023 due to the open house for current and newly elected commissioners. An update on improving the performance of certain funds will possibly be done along with a semi-annual budget review.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly adjourned the informal work session of November 7, 2023 at 6:35 p.m.