

City of Fairlawn
Zoning, Housing & Residential Building Department

ANNUAL REPORT

2016

Enclosed you will find the annual report outlining the activities and programs of the Zoning, Housing & Residential Building Department as prepared by Christopher Randles, Zoning, Housing & Residential Building Commissioner.

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Permits/Certificates Issued

In 2016 the Department completed transactions for 558 permits and certificates totaling \$93,119. The reported value of all construction in the City for the year was \$9,766,597 and 413 new jobs have been added to the City in 2016. Additionally, the Department certified a total of \$4,271.94 to the County Fiscal Officer for collection for repair work that was completed under orders of the Real Property Maintenance Board in order to bring properties into compliance with the Property Maintenance Code. Following is a breakdown of all the transactions:

Residential Add./Alt.	6	251.12
Bond		
Invoice for bond	11	57,800.00
Foreclosed Property		
Foreclosure Registration	10	2,000.00
Vacant Structure Inspection	4	400.00
Online Permit Fee		
Online Permit Application	8	16.00
Penalty		
150%	8	138.00
200% Penalty	1	280.00
Penalty totals	9	418.00

Licensing Fee		
1 unit	75	3,750.00
2-3 units	62	3,720.00
4-5 units	27	1,890.00
6-25 units	32	3,360.00
26-100 units	2	400.00
101 or more	2	620.00
Registration Fee totals	200	13,740.00

Permits by Type

Res. New Construction	2	404.00
Over 20 ft	1	40.00
Res. Addition/Alteration	16	2,321.00
Res Deck or Other	15	1,350.00
Res. Residing	4	155.00
Re-Roofing	38	1,480.00
Over 20 ft	1	75.00
Res. 150% Fine	1	91.00
Com. New 10,000 sq. ft. or less	1	200.00
Com. Tap-In Fee	1	1,000.00
Demolition	1	40.00
Earth Hauling	6	300.00
Excavation	15	800.00
Fence/Wall over 36"	25	500.00
Res. Accessory Structure	13	520.00
Res. Deck or Other	13	260.00
Res. Repair	1	40.00
Res. Single Family	2	80.00
Special Event Fee	7	700.00
Temporary Sign	29	1,875.00
Wall/Ground Sign	38	3,508.68
Zoning Use Certificate	72	11,970.00

Grand Totals	558	\$93,119.40
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Code Enforcement

In 2016 the Department issued 321 violations to 211 properties. Based upon the violation letters sent, follow-up inspections were performed as well as second notices sent in order to gain compliance. The compliance rate was 99% for remediating violations with 4 properties forwarded to the Real Property Maintenance Board for remediation and 2 administrative penalties being issued for \$200.

Inspections Performed

The Department performed a total of 1,644 inspections for the year. This amount equates to approximately 6.3 inspections per working day. Following is a breakdown of the inspections performed:

Property Maintenance	473
Building Inspections	213
Neighborhood Inspection Program	791
Misc. (Temp. Sign Removal, Gen. Insp., Vacant Homes)	167

2016 Neighborhood Inspection Program

The Inspection program consisted of inspections of the exterior of 791 residential properties distributed throughout the City in each Ward. A total of 113 single family dwellings were flagged with violations and 17 rental properties. Inspections were performed with tablets which allow for electronic input of violations in the field thereby reducing staff hours to perform this task. Following is a breakdown of the Program Inspections:

Total owner occupied properties inspected	732
Total owner occupied properties with violations	113
Rentals inspected	59
Rentals with violations	17

	Types of Violations	
	Owner Occupied	Rentals
Clean/Repair exterior walls	63	6
Roof / Gutter / Downspout issues	5	1
Paint required for structure	52	14
Fence Acc. Structure issues	7	1
Trash / Rubbish	3	0
Garage door issues	10	1
Windows & Doors	4	0
Outdoor Storage	9	1
Misc.	13	1
TOTAL	166	25

Landlord Licensing Legislation

On January 1, 2016 new legislation replaced the current Landlord Registration with Landlord Licensing requirements and added additional mandatory inspections for Landlords that have two or more notices of violation issued within a two-year period. By enacting this legislation, the City now has the authority to revoke the license for non-compliant landlords and force the forfeiture of monthly rents. Additionally, mandatory semi-annual inspections are required for a three year period at properties that are repeat offenders of the Property Maintenance Code.

The Department mailed notices to landlords in late November of 2015 informing them of the changes and duty to obtain licenses. The majority of Landlords complied with the new licensing requirement but the Department did need to issue 10 summons to Mayor's Court for Landlords who did not comply. After the summons where issued, 100% compliance was obtained.

Additionally, in 2015, 82 single family dwellings were registered as rentals and in 2016 the number licensed dropped to 80. In 2017, the number registered as rentals has dropped to 74 which indicates that as the housing market improves, the number of single family rentals is decreasing in the City.

Single Family Housing Market

The single family housing market continued to strengthen in 2016. A total of 88 homes were sold for an average sales price of \$214,596 according to NEOREX data. Foreclosure filings have reduced (see Residential Foreclosure Registration Program) as well as the number of vacant dwellings that result from this. According to the Akron Cleveland Association of Realtors Government Affairs Director, the median sales price of homes in Summit County are continuing to grow and October marked the highest pace of sales for the region for any monthly period in the last 19 years.

Energy Special Improvement District

This year the Department worked with City Council and the Legal Department to create an Energy Special Improvement District, also known as PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy). By creating this district, owners of commercial, multifamily, and nonprofit properties will be able to obtain low-cost, long-term financing for energy efficiency, water conservation, renewable energy projects, and more. The payback term may extend up to 20 years, which can save money by ensuring that yearly utility bill savings from energy improvements are greater than the annual PACE payment. The district has entered into an agreement with the building owner of 3480 West Market Street and is negotiating with Bath Township Trustees to add the Township to the District in 2017. This program will be an important economic development tool for the City as well as being good for the environment.

Personnel & Training

In July, the Department added Shannon Szittai as a full time administrative assistant. This position is an administrative support position that has shared duties in the Building & Zoning Department as well as City Hall. During an illness to the Service Department's administrative assistant, Shannon worked full time in that Department for several months.

Continuing Education continues to be an important asset and Christopher Randles and Bill Arnold attended several education seminars during the monthly FBOA meetings. Mr. Randles obtained a Commercial Building Official Certification by passing three two hour exams administered by the State of Ohio and an Interim Commercial Building Inspector Certification. Mr. Randles also attended the IEDC annual conference in Cleveland and represented the City of Fairlawn at the SelectUSA Foreign Direct Investment conference in Washington DC where he had several meetings with top executives of foreign companies

looking to invest in the United States. Lastly, Mr. Randles was elected by his peers as an Active Director of the FBOA for 2017 & 2018. Following is a list of courses attended by the staff of the department:

Christopher Randles:

1. Multiple Venting Methods (2hrs)
 2. Analysis of Changes to the 2014 NEC (3hrs)
 3. Sizing of Category I Venting Systems (2hrs)
 4. Deck, Porch and Balcony Framing Connection (2hrs)
 5. Legal Aspects of Ohio Code Administration (3hrs)
 6. Wood Use in the IBC & Recognition of Fire-Retardant Treated Wood (3hrs)
 7. Do-It-Yourself Geo Apps (2hrs)
 8. Evaluate and Maximize Return on Investments (2hrs)
 9. Refreshing Your Perspective on Foreign Direct Investment (2hrs)
 10. Digital Age and Business Attraction (2hrs)
 11. Neighborhood Development Strategies (16hrs)
 12. Grey Be Gone: Giving Greyfields a New Life (2hrs)
 13. Learning Lab by ESRI - 5 or More Things You Didn't Know You Can Do with GIS (2hrs)
 14. From the Ground Up: Economic Growth and Community Renewal (2hrs)
 15. Banking on the Future: Tax-Increment Financing (2hrs)
- Total Continuing Education – 47 hours

William Arnold

1. Multiple Venting Methods (2hrs)
 2. Analysis of Changes to the 2014 NEC (3hrs)
 3. Sizing of Category I Venting Systems (2hrs)
 4. Deck, Porch and Balcony Framing Connection (2hrs)
 5. Legal Aspects of Ohio Code Administration (3hrs)
 6. Wood Use in the IBC & Recognition of Fire-Retardant Treated Wood (3hrs)
- Total Continuing Education – 15 hours

Pam Shell

1. Excel Training (16hrs)

Residential Demolition Program

In 2016 the Department did not demolish any structures. Two vacant lots that were the result of previous demolitions, are currently under construction with new owner occupied single family dwellings. A third vacant lot is slated for new construction starting in the first quarter of 2017. This is a positive trend, as the amount of home foreclosures in the City continues to decrease and vacant lots are turning into assets by injecting new building construction into previously built-out neighborhoods.



New House Construction on Stanley Road
former razed lot



New House Construction on Revere Road
former razed lot

Residential Foreclosure Registration Program

In May of 2015, City Council enacted new registration requirements for residential foreclosures. The intent of the newly enacted legislation is to give the City notice of foreclosure filings and provide contact information of responsible parties that the City can contact in case of emergency or to remedy property maintenance issues. The City issued 10 Foreclosure Registrations of which 2 are currently vacant structures and 2 are no longer in foreclosure. In 2015 four structures in foreclosure were vacant. In 2014 there were approximately 27 new foreclosure filings, 10 in 2015 and 4 in 2016. The drop in new single family foreclosure filings is a strong indicator that housing continues to stabilize after the effects of the Great Recession. The department collected a total of \$2,100 in registration fees for this program.

Boards & Commissions

Planning Commission

In 2015 the Planning Commission reviewed 19 projects with requests for approval and collected \$6,200 in fees. One notable project reviewed and approved included the approval of building façade upgrades for the three buildings at 33 Shiawassee Avenue with West Point Market opening their new flagship retail store in November. Also approved were exterior façade improvements for Target, Dewey's Pizza at Summit Mall, Burntwood Tavern and Firehouse Subs at the former Wendy's location. The value of all construction approved in 2016 by the Planning Commission is \$13,983,239.

Board of Building & Zoning Appeals

In 2016 the BZA decided on 22 requests for variance. The Board collected \$5,200 in fees and had 9 meetings during the year.

Real Property Maintenance Board

The Board conducted 2 meetings and heard 4 cases all of which were brought to the board by Zoning Staff pursuing orders to make repairs in order to remove code violations. Additionally, the board heard one appeal of orders issued by the Department. Three of the cases gained code compliance by owner action and one case had to be remedied by hiring a contractor to paint the structure. The work performed, totaling \$4,200, has been assessed to the tax bill of the real property for reimbursement.

Additionally, this is the first year that the Board now has an alternate member. The alternate member will fill in at a meeting if another member cannot attend. This will ensure that a quorum is in place, thereby reducing the potential for delays in gaining code compliance.

Community Improvement Corporation

The CIC met 13 times during the year and discussed numerous projects. The CIC petitioned to have vacant lots on Bancroft and Winchester Roads rezoned and then transferred the land to the City to add the land to Fort Island Park. The Bancroft Road lot was purchased from a private owner during the year as well. A vacant lot at 434 Holliston Drive was purchased at Sherriff's Auction for \$17,000 and then resold for new single family home construction for \$36,000. The CIC was able to net a total revenue of \$15,623.23 for this project. Additionally, in 2016 the CIC authorized the preparation of plans and specifications for the installation of Southwestern Blvd. in Fairlawn Corporate Park and moved forward with installation of the roadway under the supervision of the City Engineer and Service Department. In December, the CIC received reimbursement for \$100,000 of the roadway construction from an ODOT Jobs and Commerce grant. The CIC negotiated and approved a Job Creation and Retention Grant for Risk International on Embassy Parkway. Finally, the CIC listed the vacant lot at 3241 Ridgewood for sale in conjunction with the neighboring vacant land for a future single family development.

In addition to these important projects, in 2015 the CIC hired planning firm OHM to conduct a study of the existing multi-family residence district around the intersection of Chamberlain and South Miller Roads. The CIC conducted three task-force meetings with OHM and approved a final comprehensive redevelopment plan for this area. The City has already implemented two of the strategies recommended in the Plan with plans to continue implementing more in 2017.