

Ruthanne Fuller Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts

Department of Inspectional Services
Department of Planning and Development
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Anthony Ciccariello,
Commissioner of

Inspectional Services

Barney S. Heath, Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 22, 2023

TO: City Council

FROM: Anthony Ciccariello, Commissioner of Inspectional Services

Barney Heath, Director of Planning and Development

Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director of Planning and Development

Deb Finamore, Executive Administrator

Katie Whewell, Chief Planner for Current Planning

Alyssa Sandoval, Deputy Chief Planner for Current Planning

CC: Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer

Maureen Lemeiuex, Chief Financial Officer Joseph Mulvey, Chief Information Officer

Re: NewGov Status Report

The Departments of Inspectional Services (ISD) and Planning and Development are pleased to report that the new permitting system "NewGov" is working quite well since its launch in May 2022. The system has dramatically increased the efficiency and user experience of city staff seeing everything in one place instead of making calls and e-mails to city staff within other departments to track down where an application is within its respective process. City staff can see extensive information and history of a property by simply searching the address and going to a property's "landing page" (Attachment A). This memo will primarily focus on the staff experience of utilizing the software, but staff have received positive feedback from the public, as well as minor requests from frequent external users (such as permitting attorneys) to enhance their experience with the permitting system.

<u>Planning</u>

The Planning Department has found NewGov extremely useful in managing the special permit process and the follow up after a special permit is approved (building permit and certificate of occupancy). There are several steps built in (Attachment B) which trigger various workflows with corresponding steps dependent on the type of application and in certain circumstances, and the type of zoning relief sought. For example, projects with seven or more units are automatically prompted to upload an Inclusionary Housing Plan, since that is the documentation which corresponds with their project. Another example is when reviewing a special permit application for completeness, staff can click a box that will then loop in the Engineering Division to review in accordance with the Stormwater and/or I&I Ordinances.

Properties with a special permit also receive a "flag" that is additional notification to other city departments whose work involves that property to alert them there are additional layers of review associated with the application.

Efforts thus far have gone into the special permit and building permit processes (the front-end processes). While the system works well, staff are still discovering areas where minor tweaks need to be made. These tweaks and hurdles are primarily around applications that were imported into NewGov from the former system, Community Plus, which is not entirely unexpected that there are some issues to work through when data is imported to a new system. Work is ongoing to establish and improve a process for capturing ongoing conditions relating to special permits. A new record type has been created for this and the Deputy Chief Planner is currently testing and ensuring the new record type will work as planned.

Inspectional Services

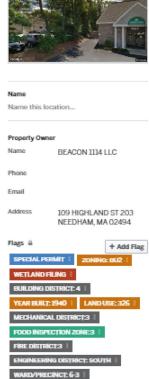
One aspect of NewGov that has been particularly helpful in terms of efficiency to the Inspectional Services team is regarding properties with a special permit, staff are now able to see the recorded special permit, as well as the approved plans that were submitted with the special permit application. Inspectional Services staff can also view applications/permits for external departments such as Historical, Historic Districts, Engineering, Health Department and building, plumbing, gas and electrical permits. This is helpful as Inspectional Services staff are the ones who the public first meet at the customer facing counter. ISD staff can quickly see the appropriate department they may need to loop in to answer more specific questions on a property and whether the site is subject to certain jurisdictions, such as Conservation or Historic.

When working withing the system, staff can also communicate with the applicant and other city staff on an application/record. This is extremely important when an inspector is out of the office. In this scenario, another inspector can quickly see what is happening with the application and can move the project forward or provide a quick response on any next steps. ISD as well as the applicants can enter inspection requests and payments in the system. Workflow steps in the applications allow other departments to give approval and ask questions before permits are issued.

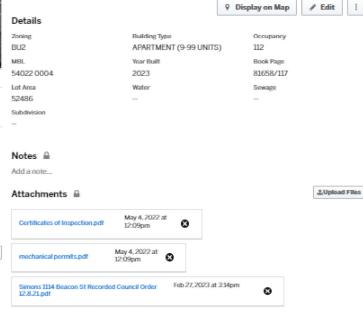
ISD is also utilizing the new software for Zoning Enforcement complaints and all information regarding leaf blowers. Residents can submit complaints, which is routed to an inspector. All inspectors have iPads to use in the field and are able to upload pictures to the records instantly which frees up their time to work on other matters, such as reviewing new projects.

1114 BEACON ST NEWTON HIGHLANDS, MA 02461 Peedback





FRONTAGE: 158 FT.



Records

#	Туре	Date Submitted	Status
PL-23-842	Plumbing Permit Application	Jun. 16, 2023	ACTIVE
BP-28-1162 172 - BCC-23-50	Building Permit - Application	Apr. 26, 2023	ACTIVE
ENG-22-442	Engineering Construction Per	Jun. 29, 2022	ACTIVE
EL-22-934	Electrical Permit Application	Apr. 25, 2022	ACTIVE
EL-19-1506	Electrical Permit Application	Jun. 30, 2019	ACTIVE
BP-13-99	Building Permit - Application	Jan. 16, 2013	ACTIVE
BP-06-2011	Building Permit - Application	Oct. 31, 2006	ACTIVE
BCC-23-50 172 - BCC-23-50	Building Permit - Change of C	Aug. 28, 2023	COMPLETE
FHOT-23-81	Fire Hot Work (Welding, Cuttin	Aug. 9, 2023	COMPLETE
FPU-23-73	Universal Fire Permit - NFD Int	Jan. 19, 2023	COMPLETE
FPU-22-518	Universal Fire Permit - NFD Int	Aug. 31, 2022	COMPLETE
CR-22-11	Consistency Ruling Request	Jul. 29, 2022	COMPLETE
FPU-22-356	Universal Fire Permit - NFD Int	Jul. 25, 2022	COMPLETE
BP-22-4268	Building Permit - Application	May. 12, 2022	COMPLETE
BP-22-3977	Building Permit - Application	Apr. 19, 2022	COMPLETE
ENG-22-45	Engineering Construction Per	Feb. 2, 2022	COMPLETE

Attachment A

Attachment B Special Permit Application · Add to a project

Expiration Date

SP-22-143

