

Staff Report to Council

Building Department

FILE: 02-0810-01/23

REPORT DATE: February 03, 2023

MEETING DATE:

February 28, 2023

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Chantal Gemperle, Manager of Building & Bylaw Services

SUBJECT: Building Permit Awareness Campaign

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW/APPROVAL:



RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Council:

- A. Receive for information the staff report entitled "Building Permit Awareness Campaign" dated February 3, 2023; OR
 - B. Other.
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform Council about the building permit campaign scheduled to run throughout the month of March.

☒ Information Report

☐ Decision Report

☐ Direction Report

DISCUSSION

Background:

Over the past few years, staff have noticed an increase in complaints related to construction work completed without a building permit. Since COVID-19, residents are home more often and are noticing and expressing concerns to City Hall about construction taking place. Many citizens fail to realize that a building permit is required until after the work is complete. This lack of realization is taxing to staff resources across numerous departments. The Building Department has collaborated with the Communications Department to develop a residential building permit awareness campaign to inform the community of the requirements and importance of building permits.

Relevant Policy, Bylaw or Legislation:

[Building Bylaw No. 2131, 2003](#)

[Zoning Bylaw No. 2505, 2011](#)

[BC Building Code](#)

Analysis:

The Building Department works to protect the health and safety of persons and property by confirming that buildings and their systems generally conform to relevant bylaws, the BC Building Code and other applicable standards. The Building Department administers Building Bylaw 2131, 2003 and through this bylaw, the BC Building Code and other regulations.

The Building Department is notified of construction occurring or having occurred without a building permit by way of complaints or by observation while out in the community.

Construction completed without a permit may have the following consequences:

- Work that fails to meet the current Building Code may result in structural collapse, leaks, flooding, rot, mold and fires;
- Work that fails to meet the zoning requirements as it relates to setbacks, height and floor area restrictions, may result in the structure needing to be removed;
- Work completed without a permit could affect the home owners ability to sell the property down the road, and also could impact home owner insurance.

Work completed without a permit happens for various reasons:

- Property owners are not aware that the type of work they are contemplating requires a building permit;
- Permitting process is too cumbersome and could delay a project;
- Permit requirements could increase the construction costs;
- Permit fees are too high.

Often the building/structure does not comply with the Building Code and/or relevant bylaws. Trying to bring a project, after it has been built, into compliance with the Building Code and relevant bylaws can be costly and in some instances not achievable.

To ensure that Pitt Meadows residents are aware of the requirements for building permits the Building Department has worked with the Communications Department to develop a proactive residential building permit campaign.

Objectives for the campaign:

- To raise awareness about when a building permit is required
- Enhance the information on pittmeadows.ca

Target Audiences:

- Pitt Meadows Residents in Single Family Homes;
- Farms in Pitt Meadows; and
- Residents from neighbouring municipalities considering building, renovating or changing uses of properties in Pitt Meadows.

Tactics & Touchpoints:

- Enhanced webpage with categorized subsections and resources;
- Postcard mailer to all households;
- Pattison Digital board;
- Newspaper Ads (print and digital);
- Social media posts and boosted ads;
- Web spotlight (create permanent place in global links);
- City Talks;
- Poster outside of Council Chambers;
- Inclusion of info on property tax statement envelope.

High-Level Key Messages:

A building permit is required to:

- Build any kind of structure larger than 100 sq ft (10x10);
- Make alterations, renovations and repairs to existing buildings or structures;
- Construct a swimming pool;
- Finish an unfinished area (i.e. basement);
- Build a deck;
- Enclose a carport or create a garage or living space;
- Demo a building;
- Move any building, structure or mobile home;
- Place a manufactured home on any land;
- Install a new wood stove or chimney;
- Repair a building damaged by fire, flood or earthquake;
- Construct a retaining wall; and
- Change a use or occupancy of a building.

The campaign is scheduled to run for six weeks launching on February 24 in City Talks.

COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

- ☐ Principled Governance ☐ Balanced Economic Prosperity ☒ Corporate Excellence
☐ Community Spirit & Wellbeing ☐ Transportation & Infrastructure Initiatives
-

WORKPLAN IMPLICATIONS

- ☒ Already accounted for in department workplan / no adjustments required
☐ Emergent issue / will require deferral of other priority(ies)
☐ Other
-

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- ☐ None ☒ Budget Previously Approved ☐ Referral to Business Planning
☐ Other

The cost of the Building Permit Awareness Campaign is \$5,000 and has already been accounted for in the City's approved 2023 budget.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- ☒ Inform ☐ Consult ☐ Involve ☐ Collaborate ☐ Empower
-

KATZIE FIRST NATION CONSIDERATIONS

Referral ☐ Yes ☒ No

SIGN-OFFS

Written by:

Chantal Gemperle,
Manager of Building & Bylaw Services

Reviewed by:

Carolyn Baldrige,
Manager Communications & Community
Engagement

Diane Chamberlain,
Acting Director of Building & Bylaw Services

ATTACHMENT(S):

None.