

**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

ITEM _____

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

98-532

SYNOPSIS -

AGENDA:

A reorganization within the Community Development Department is proposed in which inspectors from the Housing Code Enforcement Division and the Neighborhood Health and Zoning Division would be combined into a single organizational unit. The intent of this proposal is to eliminate duplication in enforcement activities, create smaller inspection territories, focus division activities more closely on neighborhood property maintenance issues, and foster greater interaction and cooperation between inspectors and neighborhood organizations.

DECEMBER 7, 1998

SUBJECT:

CONSOLIDATION OF HOUSING CODE ENFORCEMENT AND NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH AND ZONING DIVISIONS

The current job classification of Neighborhood Health and Zoning Administrator (SPM Range 31) will be replaced with the classification of Neighborhood Inspections Administrator (SPM Range 34A). The revised classification will reflect the combination of Housing Code Enforcement and Zoning/Health Duties with a greater emphasis on property maintenance issues and interaction with neighborhoods.

TYPE:

RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE

SUBMITTED BY:

FISCAL IMPACT -

ERIC A. ANDERSON
CITY MANAGER

**Job Classification Differential
Neighborhood Inspections Administrator**
(from SPM Range 31 to SPM Range 34A)
First year (April-June, 1999) \$ 4,300
Ongoing yearly costs \$ 17,000/yr.

**Reclassification of Senior Inspectors (2)
to Working Supervisors (2)**
(from MEA Range 28 to SPM Range 27)
Costs starting July 1999: \$ 6,000/yr.

Inspection positions (20)

(from MEA Range 26 to MEA Range 27)
Costs starting July 1999: \$ 44,000/yr.
Total Ongoing costs \$ 67,000/yr

**Addition of previously approved
Inspection positions (3)**

(MEA RANGE 27 to be funded by Mid American Energy rebate)

Costs starting July 1999: \$115,500/yr.

Additional First Year Costs beginning July 1999

· Purchase & operation of 3 vehicles \$ 59,000

· Miscellaneous Office Expenses

(computers, Telephones, etc.) \$ 6,000

Total Mid American Energy Rebate supported first year \$180,500

Mid American Energy Rebate Supported (Ongoing)

Inspection Positions \$115,500

Operational and depreciation expenses for vehicles \$ 15,000

Total \$130,000

RECOMMENDATION -

Receive and File for inclusion in the budget approval process.

BACKGROUND -

The issue of neighborhood property maintenance has long been a matter of concern to Council Members, neighborhood leadership, and City staff. These issues are primarily addressed through the enforcement activities by staff from the Housing Code Enforcement and Neighborhood Health and Zoning Divisions of the Community Development Department.

In 1996, the Environmental Health and the Zoning Divisions were combined to create efficiencies and to reduce the duplication of effort in dealing with neighborhood property maintenance issues. Since that time, we have made a number of changes in the City's approach to enforcement in order to streamline this process and more quickly and effectively address property violations.

In spite of this, we have a duplication of effort between the Housing Code Enforcement Division and the Neighborhood Health and Zoning Division with regard to enforcement activities directed at certain properties.

In an analysis of the current organization, I find that a combination of these two enforcement groups would eliminate the remaining overlap in effort, provide for substantially smaller inspection territories, and allow inspectors to develop a "beat cop" approach in working with neighborhoods to address a broad spectrum of interior and exterior maintenance issues at both owner-occupied and rental properties.

To provide for expanded support services and to expedite the processing of violations, a legal assistant or legal secretary will be added to the Legal Department and assigned to the proposed division. This position will also be funded from the Mid American Energy rebate.

In addition, by reassigning certain non-property maintenance job functions (e.g. Board of Adjustment cases) to other divisions or departments, the newly formed division will have the ability to focus its efforts and attention more closely on neighborhood property maintenance issues.

As part of this analysis, it is apparent that the proposed job functions and required staff orientation will necessitate the elimination of current inspector, supervisory, and administrative job classifications within the Housing Code Enforcement division and the Neighborhood Health and Zoning division. These will be replaced with the three new job descriptions, which are presented as attachments to this letter.

With the exception of the clerical positions, which will support the new division, the newly created inspector, supervisory, and administrative positions will be filled through an interview process, which will begin in April 1999 and be completed by the end of June 1999.

For current employees in these job descriptions who may fail to secure a new position within the reorganized division, those who qualify may opt for retirement under

IPERS eligibility rules or elect to accept severance benefits similar to those proposed under the Information and Technology Department reorganization.

The Severance Program, for eligible employees who execute a Release Agreement waiving actions against the City, consists of:

Cash Payment(s) of 50 percent of the employee's sick leave balance plus four months salary NOT TO EXCEED \$1,000 for each full year of service (with a minimum of \$5,000);

Health Insurance Coverage for six months (or until employed by another employer, whichever occurs first) AND Outplacement Services through a professionally facilitated Career Continuation Workshop and support services; OR, Health Insurance Coverage for up to two years (or until employed by another employer or Medicare eligible) WITHOUT outplacement services.

Participants in the Severance Program may choose to receive their payout in quarterly installments over a period not to exceed four years commencing on July 1, 1999.

Participants also agree that if they return to City employment, they will reimburse the City a prorated amount of the cash incentive payment received before reemployment.

All Community Development employees who may separate from the City in this reorganization, whether participants in the Severance Program or not, will receive normal payouts of vacation, holidays, and accrued C-time. Additionally, all employees who separate under this reorganization with more than 20 years of service, will receive a 50 percent payout of sick leave hours accrued.

To assist in implementing this re-organization, a series of employee teams have been formed to address a number of issues such as training needs, clerical support, office location and space needs, database management, and a C.Q.I. analysis of how the division will function on a daily basis.

This team has identified a total of fifty-three separate job tasks, which exist within both divisions. Of these, the group has recommended that 20 stay with the neighborhood inspection division; these are tasks that are most closely directed at resolving existing property maintenance issues. Twenty-four tasks are recommended to be moved to the Permit and Development Center as being related more to questions of new development. Five job functions are recommended to be moved to other City departments; and three tasks continue to be under study as to their proper placement.

If Council votes to receive and file the proposed job descriptions and reorganization concept, the recruitment for a new division administrator will begin immediately. I anticipate that the new division will be functional by June 1999.