**INC ZONING AND PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES – May 16, 2015**

By Michael Henry

**Evelyn Baker, Deputy Director of the Community Planning and Development Department (CPD)** evelyn.baker@denvergov.org, 720-865-2823 gave an overview of current and future CPD activities, with assistance from Andrea Burns, Communications Director for CPD – andrea.burns@denvergov.org. The entire presentation, which is well worth study by any neighborhood representatives interested in planning and zoning issues, is available at **INC ZAP CDP Oveview.pdf** Key points were:

* CPD has recently completed a comprehensive strategic plan for 2015. Major upcoming initiatives are: 1) an update of 2002’s Blueprint Denver, Denver’s land use and transportation plan, will begin later in 2015 with much community involvement; 2) a Denver Transit Plan; and 3) Neighborhood Planning Initiative, the goal of which is to have current plans for all Denver neighborhoods – Caryn Champine is working on criteria for the timing of the plans – caryn.champine@denvergov.org. Forty-six percent of the city has no adopted neighborhood plan; 8.9% of the city has plans adopted before 1990; 28.2% of the city has plans adopted between 1990 and 1999 and 22.3% has plans adopted since 2000.
* There have been many recent improvements on the CPD website and we welcome additional ideas for improvement - [www.denvergov.org/cpd](http://www.denvergov.org/cpd).
* The rezoning process is explained in much detail at [www.denvergov.org/rezoning](http://www.denvergov.org/rezoning).
* The entire zoning code is available at [www.denvergov.org/zoning](http://www.denvergov.org/zoning).
* During the last year, CPD has initiated earlier notification by e-mail to Registered Neighborhood Organizations as soon as an applicant for a rezoning files a formal application.
* CPD strongly encourages applicants for rezonings to meet early and often with neighbors.
* CPD planners are willing to converse with neighborhood representatives about upcoming rezoning applications.
* CPD staff reports, written public comments on rezoning applications and Planning Board meeting agendas can be seen at [www.denvergov.org/planningboard](http://www.denvergov.org/planningboard).
* There has been a 78% increase in building permits between 2010 and 2013.
* In 2014 City Council approved 34 zoning map amendments, only 43% of the applications received by CPD staff, which disproves the assertion that all applications are rubber-stamped by CPD and City Council.
* Landmark preservation information can be found at [www.denvergov.org/p reservation](http://www.denvergov.org/preservation).
* The first public phase of the new permitting software system Accela will be launched on June 8. More information can be found at the Development Services page - [www.denvergov.org/ds](http://www.denvergov.org/ds). Searchable permits will come later.
* CPD has recently established an interactive feature at [www.denvergov.org/maps](http://www.denvergov.org/maps) (search for neighborhood plans) where one can click on a citywide map for a specific neighborhood to see all applicable plans for that area. This is a feature that INC has requested for some time.
* CPD will develop an electronic version of the Neighborhood Handbook developed in 2006 by Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation and CPD (still available online at [www.neighborhoodlink.com/INC/pages](http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/INC/pages)) with updated links and encourages feedback on what information should be provided.

**Janice Tilden, Technical Director of the Board of Adjustment for Zoning Appeals** (BOA), janice.tilden@denvergov.org, informed the committee of the activities of the Board. The BOA has been operating since 1925, when Denver’s first zoning code was adopted. The Board’s activities, including its rules and its 2014 annual report are available at [www.denvergov.org/boa](http://www.denvergov.org/boa). The board can grant variances to property-owners who file appeals or extensions of time for illegal uses. In some years, the number of BOA cases has been over 400; however, in 2014 only 184 cases were filed, probably due to the fact that the 2010 zoning code and some 2014 text amendments have made many conditions that would have violated the new zoning code now conform to the code or they can be dealt with administratively by the Zoning Administration. Notifications of all cases are sent to the applicable RNOs. RNOs that wish to testify or submit letters should provide all of the information requested in the notification, including date of the group’s decision, etc. The BOA staff members encourage all applicants to meet with neighbors.