AGENDA MEMORANDUM
Public Hearing/ First Reading for the City Council Meeting of March 26, 2013
Second Reading/ Action for the City Council Meeting of April 9, 2013

DATE: February 22, 2013

TO: Ronald L. Olson, City Manager

FROM: Mark Van Vleck, P.E., Interim Director, Development Services
MarkVV@cctexas.com
361.826.3246

Amendment to the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 14, Article II,
City of Corpus Christi Technical Construction Codes:
Division 7, Plumbing code, Section 14-281, Plumbing code, and Division 8, Residential code,
Section 14-292, Residential construction code.

CAPTION:

Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 14, "DEVELOPMENT SERVICES," Article II, "City of Corpus Christi Technical Construction Codes," Division 7, "PLUMBING CODE," Section 14-281, "Plumbing Code," and Division 8, "RESIDENTIAL CODE," Section 14-292, "Residential construction code," by changing the frequency of testing for residential irrigation backflow devices; providing for severance, penalties, publication, and an effective date.

PURPOSE:

Create new subsections (10.1) pertaining to Section 312.10 of the International Plumbing Code, which relates to inspection and testing of backflow prevention assemblies and (16.1) pertaining to Section P2503.8 of the International Residential Code, which also relates to inspections and testing of backflow prevention assemblies. In doing so, we will establish new language and change the testing requirements from annual to triennial.

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS:

The Backflow Prevention Program was instituted in 1996 to protect the City's potable water supply from potential hazards contaminating customer internal water distribution systems. The prevention program is regulated by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SWDA) of 1974, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), as well as Plumbing and Building Codes. The program is administered by the Backflow Division in Development Services, and funded by the Water Department.

If a backflow preventer fails on a lawn irrigation system there are many potential hazards such as lawn chemicals, fertilizer, or pet waster that can leak into our general water supply. There are currently 10,872 active irrigation systems with backflow preventers according to our records with an annual inspection failure rate of 15%.

On December 13, 2012, Development Services presented a backflow power point to the Mechanical/Plumbing Advisory Board seeking their recommendation. The Board recommended that we adhere to the code as it is written, which is annual testing on residential irrigation backflow devices.

Subsequent to, we took the same presentation to City Council on January 15, 2013, in the decision to have residential backflow irrigation devices tested triennial instead of annually was reached unanimously.

Additionally, staff prepared an ordinance amending the language to read triennial testing instead of annual testing in the International Plumbing Code and International Residential Code. The ordinance was taken to Mechanical /Plumbing Advisory Board on February 14, 2013 seeking their recommendation. The Board's decision to leave the language as is was unanimous. The Board was in opposition of changing the testing to anything other than annually.

ALTERNATIVES:

Make no change to the 2009 International Plumbing Code and Residential Code as adopted, leaving the more stringent requirement in place.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

In 2009, 391 backflow assemblies for residential irrigation were installed. Since that time four of those devices have had to be replaced due to multiple failures or device defects.

The regional water system depends on surface water for its supply. Best Management Practices in maintaining water quality is essential to healthy systems. Any reduced vigilance raises the risk for intrusion of contaminants into the system.

Back flow inspections are important for public health and welfare of the community and ensure that back flow equipment is maintained and operating correctly. If there were to be an intrusion into our system, it could lead to a localized or system wide boil water order until the water is cleared for drinking. A boil order could potentially cost the city hundreds of thousands of dollars and the loss of consumer confidence.

CONFORMITY TO CITY POLICY:

The administrative provisions of the 2009 International Plumbing Code and Residential Code allow for local amendments to developed and incorporated to meet the needs of the community.

EMERGENCY / NON-EMERGENCY:

This is a non-emergency item.

DEPARTMENTAL CLEARANCES:

Mechanical/Plumbing Advisory Board

Legal

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

□ Operating □ Revenue □ Capital ☑ Not applicable

Fiscal Year: 2011-2012	Project to Date Expenditures (CIP only)	Current Year	Future Years	TOTALS
Line Item Budget				
Encumbered / Expended Amount				
This item				
BALANCE				

Fund(s):

Comments: None

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the proposed ordinance, and reiterates the importance of annual testing.

Mechanical/Plumbing Advisory Board recommends denial of the proposed ordinance, and opposes any other action other than annual testing.

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Ordinance