

ZIR Historical Timeline

As of June 6, 2013

The Santa Barbara Association of REALTORS® (SBAOR) has often been asked what steps have been taken in regards to the City of Santa Barbara Zoning Information Report (ZIR) problems. Below is a *brief* historical timeline describing various meetings and actions which are leading SBAOR to ask the City Council to make ZIR's voluntary. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Krista Pleiser, Government Affairs Director at (805) 884-8609 or kpleiser@sbaor.com.

June 2009 – The SBAOR ZIR Task Force was formed in order to address problems surrounding ZIR's.

- The conclusion of the first meeting was Santa Barbara City staff does not understand the volatility of an escrow, short sales, or a 30 day escrow. It was also concluded that ZIR's can negatively impact property values and ZIR's need to be reliable.
- Began receiving "stories" of inaccurate ZIR's

July 2009 – Met with Santa Barbara City staff about problems with ZIR's. The following issues were discussed:

- Issues with timing from application to completion.
- A suggestion by Santa Barbara City staff was to educate SBAOR members on getting ZIR's done as soon as a listing comes on the market. SBAOR disseminated this information, but the problem is property owners don't know if their property will sell and therefore they don't want to invest that much money.
- Discussed emailing reports and accepting faxed applications with credit card information.
- Discussed priority in the permitting process for those who have violations and need to have resolution.

October 2009

- SBAOR sent a letter to Santa Barbara City staff concurring with a suggestion put forth by the joint Planning Commission and City Council. The suggestion was to make ZIR's optional.
- Met with Santa Barbara City staff about problems with ZIR's. The following issues were discussed:
 - Proposed the idea of making condo's optional and Santa Barbara City staff concurred with the Task Force that condos shouldn't need to be mandatory.
 - Proposed the idea of privatizing the ZIR process.
 - Learned about the holiday furloughs and how they would affect ZIR's. SBAOR worked with Santa Barbara City staff to disseminate the information to entire membership

January 2010 – SBAOR staff had a conversation with Santa Barbara City staff about:

- When condos will become optional.
- Informed that ZIR's probably won't become optional for single and multi-family dwellings because ZIR's are used as a measuring tool for the housing element, good statistics come out of ZIR's, and ZIR's are good at catching illegal units.
- Santa Barbara City staff asked SBAOR staff to look into if home inspectors would be open to the idea of privatizing ZIR's.

February 2010

- SBAOR ZIR Task Force met:
 - Discussed why the City of Santa Barbara didn't need ZIR's and concluded that the County and Goleta don't have them and those areas aren't health and safety hazard areas or slums.
 - The Task Force received information from the City of San Marino on their privatization ordinance and forwarded it to the Santa Barbara City staff
- Met with Santa Barbara City staff:
 - Received news that Jinny's replacement would be Betsy Teter as ZIR Inspector
 - Discussed the privatization plan

April 2010

- Met with Santa Barbara City staff:
 - ZIR's would be delivered via email in June
 - Continued discussions about making condos optional
 - Was told by Santa Barbara City staff that they are proposing an increase in the price of ZIR's from \$415 to \$465 in July
- Santa Barbara Finance Committee meets. A Councilmember questions if increasing the ZIR fees will make the process happen any faster. The answer from Santa Barbara City staff was no, the purpose of increasing the fee is to keep a full time employee (FTE).

May 2010

- The SBAOR Task Force writes a letter to the City Council urging them to support making condos optional for ZIR's and to oppose the increase in the ZIR fees.
- Santa Barbara Budget Hearings bring up several questions such as "do the fees justify the service". Condos are forwarded and the increased fees pass.

June 2010 – Members of the SBAOR ZIR Task Force and GRC met with every Councilmember to discuss the ZIR issues. There was interest in changing ZIR's but no real action to do anything about it.

October 2010 – The Ordinance Committee met to make minor ordinance revisions to ZIR's which included making ZIR's optional for condos. The language is vetted with SBAOR and passes.

November 2010 – City Council met and made condos optional

May 2011 – SBAOR ZIR Task Force met and discovers more issues with ZIR's:

- ZIR's calling out violation on laundry facilities in 20x20 garages, there's no consistency, ZIR's are way too expensive since they can't be relied upon, and reports are getting a note in the file instead of being cleaned even if the violation was proven wrong.
- Introduced "grandfathering" idea to Task Force

September 2011 – Met with Santa Barbara City staff to discuss:

- "Grandfathering"
- The City must stick to zoning issues only
- Went over the scope and history of a ZIR

November 2011 – SBAOR ZIR Task Force sent a letter to Santa Barbara City staff following up on the "grandfathering" idea.

January 2012 – Met with Santa Barbara City staff

- Discussed before mentioned issues

February 2012

- SBAOR worked with Santa Barbara City staff to create a pamphlet explaining the ZIR process
- SBAOR sent a letter to the City Council and Planning Commissioners requesting that ZIR's continue to be a major work assignment within the Planning Department. This was accepted.

March 2012 – SBAOR ZIR Task Force and GRC discussed going forward to City Council with an optional or elimination plan.

May 2012 – SBAOR submits a letter to the City Clerk requesting to be placed on the Council agenda to discuss openly the issues of ZIR's and to present the various options SBAOR and Santa Barbara City staff has worked on. Discovered that the information about how to submit an agenda request was wrong on the city website and was informed that 2 Councilmembers need to place it on the agenda.

May – August 2012 – Met with various City Council members who all agreed that something should be done to rectify the ZIR problems, but they don't know what the solutions are.

September 2012 – Met with Santa Barbara City staff and department heads

- Various solutions were discussed and the City agreed to meet with SBAOR again after the City was able to have an internal meeting to discuss all the solutions.

October 2012 - Planning Commission and City Council jointly met and agreed that ZIR's are a problem.

November 2012 – Received a response to SBAOR's May letter from the Santa Barbara City staff. The letter explained the City's role in ZIR's and responded to the various solutions presented.

December 2012 – Met with Santa Barbara City staff and department heads as a follow up to the September meeting. It was discussed that an appeal form, guideline menus, and ordinance changes would be reviewed by the Santa Barbara City staff to determine if these would be viable options.

February 2013 – SBAOR ZIR Task Force met and decided to see what Santa Barbara City staff had to offer and if the proposed changes wouldn't rectify the problems then SBAOR would go forward to City Council.

March 2013

- SBAOR ZIR Task Force met and decided that the proposals of an appeal form, guideline menus, and ordinance changes were not palatable. The proposed changes would create an additional cost to correct violations.
- Received a memorandum from Robinson & Cole that the City is not liable for any inaccurate reports. This is not a legal opinion, but an analysis.

April 2013 – SBAOR BOD voted to advocate for voluntary ZIR's at City Council

May 2013 – Met with two City Councilmembers and they will discuss this issue with Santa Barbara City staff and others concerned with this issue.

August 13, 2013 – Had ZIR issue placed on City Council agenda and City Council will have the ordinance reviewed by the Planning Commission and Ordinance Committee.

ZIR Historical Timeline

As of August 1, 2013

