



**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
*City of Albuquerque*

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Inspector General

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**DATE:** October 26, 2021

**SUBJECT:** COA Planning Building Safety Supervisor improperly approved an installation of solar panels for a City employee thus creating a hazard for firefighters. A secondary complaint was that the City employee was wasting water, during 2019 and 2020, in violation of the City's Water Conservancy Program.

**FILE NO:** 21-0061-C

**INVESTIGATOR:** Melissa R. Santistevan 

**STATUS:** Closed

**Informative Case Synopsis**

On October 20, 2021, the Office of Inspector General "OIG" received a packet of information alleging the COA Planning Building Safety Supervisor improperly approved an installation of solar panels for a City employee. A secondary complaint was that the City employee was wasting water, during 2019 and 2020, in violation of the City's Water Conservancy Program. Upon receiving this complaint, the OIG determined that the allegations did rise to the level of potential fraud, waste or abuse, initiated a case and began a fact-finding investigation. This complaint was investigated and determined not to be fraud, waste or abuse.

Pursuant to City Ordinance 2-17-2, the Inspector General's goals are to: (1) Conduct investigations in an efficient, impartial, equitable and objective manner; (2) Prevent and detect fraud, waste and abuse in city activities including all city contracts and partnerships; (3) Deter criminal activity through independence in fact and appearance, investigation and interdiction; and (4) Propose ways to increase the city's legal, fiscal and ethical accountability to insure that tax payers' dollars are spent in a manner consistent with the highest standards of local governments.

While conducting our fact-finding investigation, the OIG Investigator researched the requirements along with the plans submitted to the City Planning Department and determined that a permit was issued for Solar Under 10KW for the property located at the property identified in the complaint. On December 16, 2019, an electrical permit was issued for the property located at the property identified in the complaint. On

December 17, 2019, both the electrical permit and the Solar Under 10KW permit were approved by the City of Albuquerque Inspector and the permits were completed per the Posse Permit lookup system. The allegation that the City employee overrode the correct installation of the panels appears to be incorrect due to the fact that the City of Albuquerque Inspector inspected and approved the installation in accordance with the City's requirements.

The complainant also alleged that the improper approval of the solar installation put firemen in danger. As the City's requirements for solar panel installation do not require residential applicants to obtain approval or to have an inspection by the Albuquerque Fire Department, the complainant's allegation is unfounded.

To address the issue of the subject wasting water in 2020 and 2021, this complaint is outside the jurisdiction of the IG. The complainant is hereby directed to file a complaint with the Water Authority's Water Waste hotline @ 842-9287 option 5.

Based on the information obtained during our fact-finding investigation, the allegations in the complaint appear to be unfounded or outside the purview of the Office of Inspector general, and as such this case is being closed.