

**Code Enforcement Task Force
Meeting Notes
May 18, 2011**

The Code Enforcement Task Force convened at the Yoder Recreation Center located at the corner of 2nd and Jackson Streets at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 18th for a Walk-Through of the Tinbridge Hill Neighborhood. After brief introductions, the group commenced the Walk-Through.

The following is a list of participants and the City departments or agencies they are affiliated:

Steve Smallshaw	Communications & Marketing
Keith Wright	Community Development
Kent White	Community Development
Ed McCann	Housing Authority
Phyllis Garlick	Billings & Collections
Aubrey "Chubs" Barbour	Tinbridge Hill Neighborhood
Greg Wormser	Fire Marshal's Office
Joyce King	Neighborhood Resident
Bob Vincent	Housing Authority
H. Cary	City Council
Leslie King	City Manager's Office
Cindy Kozerow	Police Department
Tim Clements	Police Department
Numan Franklin	Public Works
Susan Hartman	City Attorney's Office
Hope Townes	City Attorney's Office

The following are areas of concern or violations noted by the participants:

Code Enforcement

Findings:

Three complaints of overgrowth on Fourth, Jackson and Floyd Streets and two complaints of inoperative motor vehicles on private property on Fourth and Third Streets.

Summary: These issues were assigned to an inspector and were cited with a 10-day notice to comply. One of these properties was assigned to the inmate crew for clean-up and the other two complied within the timeframe.

Zoning

Findings:

No Findings.

Housing Authority

Findings:

No findings during the Walk-Through, however, the Authority has recently viewed owner compliance on a property on Jackson Street originally cited for Spot Blight.

Code Enforcement Task Force
Meeting Notes (Cont'd)

Public Works/Utilities

Findings:

Discarded paint cans on 2nd Street, sidewalk repair needed on Federal and 5th Streets, litter on Fillmore Street, and a No Dumping sign on Fillmore Street missing.

Summary: Assigned to Public Works for cleaning and repairing as needed

Building Inspections

Findings:

Taylor Street 1 Structure with violations of a washing machine discharging waste into street

4th Street Property placarded

Summary: These properties have been assigned to an inspector and there is one active case on 4th Street. Please note that timeframes on housing cases may take anywhere from thirty days to perhaps a year or more. Many cases end up in court and staff is bound by the judge's ruling for compliance. Other barriers which may prolong a case include locating a responsible party, citing out-of-state property owners, and property transfers that may occur during the course of an active case.

Police Department

Findings:

No Findings

Fire Department

Finding:

No Findings

Billings & Collections

Findings:

Two properties on Fourth Street and one on Polk Street were reviewed for back taxes and past water accounts.

Summary:

All three properties were found past due. Collections is proceeding to collect past due funds.

UPDATE

Please find attached minutes from the March 16th CETF meeting.

The Task Force's next Walk-Through is scheduled for July 20th, possibly in the Denver Avenue neighborhood.

Prepared by: Keith Wright, Neighborhood Services Manager, June 9, 2011

**Code Enforcement Task Force Meeting
March 16, 2011**

Members Present: Councilman Turner Perrow,
Keith Wright, Kent White (Community Planning)
Ed McCann, Bob Vincent (Housing Authority)
Officer Tim Clement, Cindy Kozerow (Police)
Beverly Herndon (Waste Management)
Dave Owen (Public Works)
Rob Fowler, Wayne Craig (Zoning, Inspections)
Greg Wormser (Fire Marshal)
Steve Smallshaw (Communications/Marketing)

Guests: JoAnne McDonald (Historic Richmond Foundation)
Amy Swartz (Historic Richmond Foundation)

The meeting began with Keith Wright passing around the sign in sheet and asking members to provide introductions. Councilman Turner Perrow welcomed everyone and thanked those who attended the work session at City Council in February. He stated that it had been beneficial because some council members had received complaints about the CETF being a “posse” that was picking on people. The presentation corrected that and showed the goal was to enforce codes and build a partnership with the neighborhoods. He said that Council wants to keep getting these reports and that the CETF needs to make sure we are meeting our goals.

Keith gave a brief overview of his presentation to Council, stating that reviewing the material showed how the task force had changed and evolved. He said that many of the things we have done were hard to categorize because they covered everything from legal aspects to public relations with the neighborhoods. He said he would welcome suggestions for the future presentations, and according to our charter, there was supposed to be an annual update to Council. However, that had not been done, so it would be corrected. Councilman Perrow wants to plan for an update next February and then asked those who had been present what their impressions were. Dave Owen stated that the presentation showed how we addressed the quality of life issues for the neighborhoods.

Councilman Perrow then asked several questions to the group. Why are we here? Can we be more effective? Are the right team members involved? Do we need more or less people on the CETF? Do we need to make adaptations due to the recent changes in the Community Development department? Keith Wright said that the members wanted to hold a meeting to discuss such issues this month instead of doing a walk through. Councilman Perrow started off by saying he would put Steve Smallshaw on the hot seat to get his ideas and impressions. Steve said that he would like to see a coordinated wrap up and introduction filmed to use for the shows. He thinks the group works well and there is good synergy. He felt it made for good TV, interesting and educational for the citizens. He said a goal was to open up government to the citizens and make them more aware of the CETF.

Councilman Perrow responded by saying that the members are all experts in their area, and it would be beneficial to explain on camera the infractions when they are first observed so that citizens could understand them.

Cont'd
March 16th CETF Meeting

Ed McCann pointed out that having what is said on tape about certain properties can be sensitive and Steve stated he would be diligent to edit out anything regarding privacy issues. Steve also suggested that we could broaden the reach of the CETF walk throughs and not just focus on the downtown area even though we respond to requests or invitations.

Ed McCann was next on the “hot seat” and suggested we discuss ordinances and statutes, changes in state code. He gave an example of what defines blighted property and explaining what the code “tests” are to determine if a property meets the legal definition. Councilman Perrow said the CETF could be a sounding board for the ordinances and suggest solutions to problems, and review our charter to make sure we are consistent with it.

Cindy Kozerow was the next person on the “hot seat” to share her concerns. She said that having the walk through on camera is somewhat restrictive due to sensitive information that members may not want to end up on tape. Officer Clements said information about ongoing investigations could not be shared, but arrests and warrants served were a matter of public record. There is value in sharing information amongst the group about problem properties to see who else is involved. Beverly Herndon said working together is helpful because some of their workers had to hurry up in the past due to a pending enforcement activity. Keith Wright suggested that for stuff we do not want to be on camera, just to flag Steve and let him know and talk off camera so that we are careful with any private information.

Greg Wormser said that the group could meet off camera to discuss information, or send an email to Steve to alert him to anything that should not be included on the TV program. Beverly asked if it would be possible to have the finished show reviewed before it was aired. However, Ed McCann and Councilman Perrow felt Steve’s judgment in this would be reliable, and we could always just inform him of anything should not be aired.

Greg Wormser felt that we have the appropriate people on the task force and all work well together, and that we are heading in the right direction.

Rob Fowler mentioned Richland Hills and how the citizens felt that the City had “forgotten about the annexed areas.” He said the results from our working with that neighborhood had been positive and built a partnership.

Dave Owen suggested we find a way to do a follow up with people who invited us to come do a walk through, getting feedback from them. He stressed the need for consistency and that actually walking through the neighborhoods was important to really see the problems. Rob Fowler said that it helps to put a face with a name for the residents and build relationships.

Beverly Herndon said we should reduce repeat visits to the same neighborhoods and that having ID badges would be helpful. There was some discussion about the past group having shirts with CETF on them, and Greg Wormser and Kent White said the name could be intimidating to the public and possible changes were mentioned. These included Neighborhood Services Committee, Code Compliance Task Force, Community Service Task Force, etc. Councilman Perrow tasked Keith Wright and Kent White to recommend any changes to the name.

Cont'd
March 16th CETF Meeting

Bob Vincent said that neighbors may have different views of what is a problem that needs to be addressed, but that we must be consistent regardless of the neighborhood location. Wayne Craig agreed that we must look at and treat each code compliance issue the same in every neighborhood. He said we need to let residents know what we do and give them information about violations. He suggested explaining the procedures on the City's website.

Bob Vincent suggested we do a summary of the previous walk through and resolutions at the opening of each show. Steve Smallshaw asked if we could create a CETF page on the City's website with issues and results, phone numbers for follow up, and even interview members to inform the public about what is done after a complaint is received, etc.

Keith Wright reiterated the need for consistency as we respond to neighborhood concerns. He said we need to get the residents on board and let them know what we can and can't do. A standard procedures listing was suggested to post on line. Ed McCann suggested having a FAQ's section on the web site. There was some discussion about having a CETF Academy similar to the City's Government Academy in the future.

Bob Vincent suggested having one department be "highlighted" during a walk through to more completely explain their focus/goal.

Councilman Perrow distributed copies of the charter and asked everyone to read it and then reviewed major points covered such as giving Steve Smallshaw a sign for privacy not to record while on a walk through, looking at options for the CETF name, expanding the outreach and not being centralized in the downtown area, improve publicity of our procedures, having summaries for previous walk throughs, getting ID badges, etc. Kent White added the desire to be really proactive, cross trained, and consistent to be successful in what we are doing.

Dave Owen suggested an after-action review, and the need for increases in communications with the public.

Councilman Perrow wanted to be mindful of the time and wrap up by setting dates for future meetings. It was decided that the time would be moved to 2:00 as suggested by Officer Clements to allow for more follow up discussion. Kent White suggested doing the walks according to census tract so as not to overburden the Inspections Division. After some discussion, it was decided to hold walk throughs in March and skip November and December, and meet in January to prepare for the council report in February. Meetings will remain on the third Wednesday of the months. For the remainder of this year the dates for walk throughs are as follows: May 18, July 20, September 21, and October 19. Please mark your calendar's now so that you will be in attendance at these walk troughs.

The annual March on Litter is March 26. There was some discussion about an illegal dump site at Commerce and Jefferson Streets, and about the on going problem with Fred's store putting displays on the sidewalk. There was discussion about enforcement, permits to display items on the sidewalk, and the possible need to review the city ordinances.

The meeting was adjourned.

Meeting notes prepared by Cindy Kozerow