

September 24, 2018 Neighborhood Tour and Meeting

Martinsville City Council toured the Druid Hills/Uptown area on September 24, 2018 beginning at 5:30pm. Those present for the tour were Council Member Kathy Lawson, Council Member Jim Wood, Vice Mayor Chad Martin and Council Member Jennifer Bowles. Mayor Teague did not attend. Staff present included City Manager Leon Towarnicki, Building Inspector Kris Bridges, Property Maintenance Inspectors Andy Powers and Mark Price, and Police Chief Eddie Cassidy.

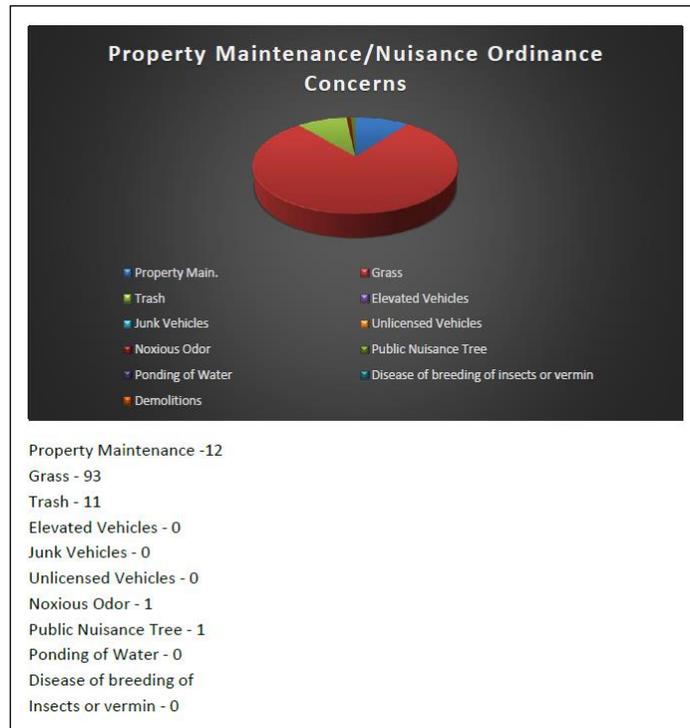
The van left the City Municipal Building at 5:30pm touring the neighborhood and properties of concern until returning to the Municipal Building at 6:30pm.

The Druid Hills/Uptown Neighborhood Meeting was held at Patrick Henry School, 1810 East Church Street at 7:30 PM, with Mayor Gene Teague presiding. Other Council Members present included Council Member Kathy Lawson, Council Member Jim Wood, Vice Mayor Chad Martin and Council Member Jennifer Bowles. Staff present included City Manager Leon Towarnicki, Assistant City Manager Wayne Knox, City Attorney Eric Monday, Clerk of Council Karen Roberts, Building Inspector Kris Bridges, Property Maintenance Inspectors Andy Powers and Mark Price, Police Chief Eddie Cassidy.

Mayor Teague called the meeting to order.

City Manager Towarnicki explained the route and concerns expressed during the tour. Towarnicki said the tour began at the City Municipal building and traveling to Piedmont Community Service's apartments that had been damaged from a recent fire. Building Inspector Bridges updated the status of cleanup and plans to rebuild. Council looked at two properties on Zee Street then traveled to Spruce Street to Cougar Paws and the previous bowling alley. Council observed tree trimming on Indian Trail and properties on Susan Lane, traveled to Corn Tassel Trail, Country Club Drive and Sam Lions Trail. The tour went on to Meadowview Trail and looked at washout damage from the May flooding as well as a home that continues to be reported to property maintenance. The Mulberry area was also visited before returning to City Hall.

Mark Price of the Inspections Department summarized property maintenance and inspection statistics and concerns.



Mayor Teague opened the meeting up to residents to voice concerns.

Suzanne Britt 1015 Indian Trail, said her home has flooded three times since May, 2018 and she cannot get anyone from the City to return her calls. Britt says there are hundreds of gallons of water coming down the hill to her home and she doesn't know where to start to get this concern corrected. Towarnicki said he would ask someone from Public Works to look at the area the next day and get with her regarding findings. Britt says the home is 53 years old and this year is the first time it's flooded.

Ms. King expressed concern that Council did not tour Church Street, stating that she is disappointed in the condition of several houses near the Oakdale intersection and landscaping in that area. It does not give a good impression to visitors to the City. King said the City owns the station on the corner of Fayette Street and 220 and says it's embarrassing that it looks so bad. Knox confirmed that the station is currently being used as a carwash and is a Brownfield project in the works. Towarnicki said there is no debris at the carwash but the building is run down and probably does need some cosmetic attention. King said the bushes around Hugo's Restaurant parking lot are diseased and most are dead; Gateway said the bushes would be the responsibility of the property owners but since the City maintains the parking lot someone should get those removed. Towarnicki said he would reach out to the Martin family to see if the bushes could be removed. King said she emailed Public Works about repainting the lines entering and exiting the parking lot to Hugo's Restaurant. She asked if there are any requirements that homes in a historic district must be painted and maintained. Bridges explained that painting is almost nit-picking in the grand scheme of property maintenance alongside homes that may be caving in; there is no distinction between homes that are in a historic district versus another area.

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Bill Moore, 508 Mulberry Road asked if mold in a home would be considered a property maintenance concern. Bridges explained they would need a right of entry into the home and once it's confirmed that there is mold, lead, etc then action could be taken by the Inspections department. Moore expressed concern about the condition of the Globman house on Church Street.

Dr. King said that one bad building can ruin the appearance of an entire neighborhood block, speaking specifically about Courthouse Square. The Martinsville workforce needs attention; so many people are being fed and receive assistance but don't want to work. There are 1200 jobs and no one skilled or willing to fill those positions. The City needs to save money and be efficient and cost effective in maintenance and repairs. King said cost savings needs to start with the school system.

There being no further business, Council Member Bowles made a motion to adjourn the meeting, all Council Members voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm

Karen Roberts
Clerk of Council

Gene Teague
Mayor