

November 24, 2014

Martinsville City Council Neighborhood Meeting for the Southside area was held on November 24, 2014, at the Fuller Memorial Baptist Church, 1204 Askin Street at 7:30 PM, with Mayor Kim Adkins presiding and Council members present including: Vice Mayor Teague, Mark Stroud, Sr., Sharon Brooks Hodge, Danny Turner and Council Member Elect Jennifer Bowles. Staff present: Leon Towarnicki, Karen Roberts, Eric Monday, Coretha Gravely, Eddie Cassady, Kenneth Draper and Andy Powers.

Mayor Adkins called the meeting to order and Rev. Fred Harding gave the invocation. Mayor Adkins asked Andy Powers to present his property maintenance report and then opened the floor for public comment.

Citizen comments and follow up:

Garland Hairston, 110 Pony Place - In residential areas if neighbors/property owners cut trees and leave on the property, is that a PM violation . *Andy Powers responded – if the property in question is a wooded lot, there is no PM violation. If the property is not a wooded lot and trees are cut and pieces/debris is left in place, that is a PM violation.* Mr. Hairston noted the retirement of Marshall Thomas in the Police Department and inquired about City's efforts to recruit more minorities to the police force. *Several City staff and Council members addressed this. HR presented a report on this matter to City Council at the January 13, 2015 meeting. A copy of the report will be available with the meeting minutes.*

Howard Hairston, 1307 Askin Street – noted there are no speed limit signs on Forest Street and Highland Street. *Speed limit signs have been placed on Highland Street*

Linda Lawry, Graves Street – made several comments about landlord/tenant relationship, noting “landlords can hold tenants hostage” in their current rental relationship through possible retaliatory actions if tenants complain/raise issues regarding dwelling conditions or issues. *Andy Powers noted there is a Landlord/Tennant Act that outlines certain rights and abilities. City Attorney Eric Monday will report on this at Council's February 10, 2015 meeting.*

Natalie Law, 1212 Roundabout Road - City has some signs posted – “No Stopping, Standing” – What has to occur for those signs to be enforced? Ms. Law noted this was occurring on a sidewalk. *Eddie C reported that PD has to witness a violation and they will check into it.*

Larry Martin – 755 Stultz Road – Captain of Neighborhood Watch at Northview Gardens Apts on Stultz Road – noted issues with drug activity in some of the buildings at the complex and apartment management appears uncaring regarding tenants allowed to live there. *PD noted that only 2 of the buildings (200 and 300 blocks) are in the City and they are now working that area. Police are working closely with Northview Gardens Management and have increased presence in the area. SID is also targeting the location. PD has also reached out to HCSO as the majority of these apartments are in their jurisdiction..*

Linda Lawry, Graves Street – complained about the noise coming from ATVs in her neighborhood, and what can be done? *Citizens should contact the Martinsville Police Department regarding complaints of this nature.*

Ruby Stultz 108 Pony Place – inquired about guardrail along Fayette and Cardinal Lane. *This issue was passed along to the Martinsville Transportation Safety Commission for their review and recommendation.*

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The TSC recommended installation of guardrail on Fayette from Pony Place to the underpass, but did not find sufficient justification for installation along Fayette from Pony Place to Pine Hall Road, nor at the intersection of Cardinal Lane/Pony Place. Installation of guardrail on Fayette from Pony Place to the underpass has been completed.

Several residents had questions about the meter-replacement project discussed at the City Council Work Session on Thursday, November 20. *No action needed.*

Shirley Frazier, 1310 Cardinal Lane – had question about what needs to occur to turn power back on in a structure where power had been disconnected for more than 6 months. *Andy P responded the structure is typically reinspected to ensure safety before turning power back on, particularly if vandalism may have occurred that may compromise the electrical system within the dwelling.*

Pastor at the Church, Fred Harding – questions about utility and garbage bills for unoccupied dwellings *Staff explained that minimum bills continue to occur even if no usage at the property, and the garbage bill is a companion bill with electric.*

Garland Hairston, Askin Street – garbage workers sometimes fail to empty garbage cans without bags. *Staff suggested they contact PW when this occurs.*

Mr. Hairston commented on street lights on Askin and a dark area near the location where “the hill” is, as Askin continues into the County. *The City has street lighting (on every other pole) on Askin St., to the City limits and the City line continues into the county beyond the city limits but City does not provide lighting in the county.*

Linda Lawry – does the proposed LED light conversion project apply to dusk-to-dawn lights on private property, purchased from the City. *Yes, all street lighting including city leased dusk to dawn lighting will be converted to LED should the project be fully implemented.*

Mr. Hairston, 1307 Askin Street – has a dusk-to-dawn light purchased from City located near his property line, and inquired if there is cost to move the light to another location within his yard to better light his property? *Issue is still unresolved - City Electric has completed considerable research into this matter and has been unsuccessful in attempts to contact Mr. Hairston (including both visits to the site as well as leaving phone messages).*

Council Member Hodge asked for a report at a later meeting regarding recruitment and diversity. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Brenda Prillaman
Clerk of Council

Kim E. Adkins
Mayor