

June 12, 2023 Southside Neighborhood Meeting

Martinsville City Council toured the Druid Hills / Uptown area on June 12, 2023 beginning at 5:30pm. Those present for the tour were Council Member Kathy Lawson, Council Member Lawrence Mitchell, Council Member Tammy Pearson, Building Inspector Kris Bridges, Inspector Luis Rosas, Inspector Andy Powers, Deputy Police Chief Chad Rhoads, and Officer Coretha Gravely. Bill Wyatt of the Martinsville Bulletin also attended.

The tour began at 5:30 from the rear of the City Municipal Building and traveled to various locations in the Druid Hills and Uptown areas. Attendees discussed a few issues on Jordan Street including a home on the demolition list and a bus that the Police Department would look into. The tour briefly stopped at Parkview and Spruce where the apartments were discussed. On Cherokee Trail, the condition of a house was discussed and will be reported. On Cherokee Court attendees discussed property that has received complaints previously. While looping back to Spruce Street, section 6A of the Dick and Willie Trail was discussed and where the crossing would be.

Neighborhood Meeting, Monday, 7:00 pm, Forest Hill Presbyterian Church, 725 Beechnut Lane – Those who attended the neighborhood tour were present for the meeting along with Vice Mayor Aaron Rawls, Clerk of Council Karen Roberts, Public Information Officer Kendall Davis, and several Police Officers. Approximately 15 residents from the area attended. Mayor Jones was not in attendance.

Vice Mayor Rawls opened the meeting at 7:00pm and welcomed attendees.

Vice Mayor Rawls called on City Manager Towarnicki to summarize the neighborhood tour from earlier in the evening and to also review issues brought up at the previous Druid Hills/ Uptown neighborhood.

Deputy Police Chief Chad Rhoads introduced several officers who were present and stated that overall, property crimes and violent crimes in the area have gone down over the past 5 years.

Inspector Luis Rosas summarized the property maintenance report, stating that the Community Development office works diligently to address all resident concerns and shared contact information and the location of the office.

Resident of Susan Lane asked what Inspections covers and asked for examples of what they are looking for specifically. Kris Bridges, Building Inspector stated that the department responds to various complaints from trash and litter to derelict homes, high grass, abandoned vehicles, etc. Inspections are complaint based. Bridges briefly explained the demolition list and how that is tracked. Resident shared that the intersection of Susan Lane and Indian Trail is owned by a realtor and it's turning into a dump. Another resident shared concerns about a large tree that has fallen in that area and asked who's responsible for getting that up, the City or property owner and how long before action would be taken. A third resident shared that there is accumulating trash at this location also. Bridges explained that they have not gotten a call

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about the lot but that Inspections would follow up with property owners to arrange clean up. City Manager Towarnicki said he would pass the concern on to Public Works and ask them to take a look at this location. Vice Mayor Rawls touched on the vacant property registry and the requirements for those property owners. Council Member Lawson advised that any reports made to Inspections are kept confidential from the property owner.

A resident expressed concern about the speeding cars and buses on Clark Road, Mulberry and Susan Lane and the safety of residents and pets. Resident also shared concerns about loud music from cars. Officer Bell said that speed trailers may be used in the area for 7-10 days to record the time of day where speeders are the worst so that an officer can be assigned to the area with radar. Rhoads asked residents to get a bus number so they can pull the GPS to track speeding history and discipline the driver. Rhoads said the new cameras are monitoring tags, not speeders or specific drivers and would allow the police to locate stolen vehicles or most recently, a missing person. Resident asked if there is an ordinance about loud music. Rhoads shared that the Police Department's hands are tied on enforcing the noise ordinance related to moving vehicles and also some equipment issues.

Resident asked if the warming center will be open again this winter and expressed concern about residents passing through her property and leaving trash. Council Member Lawson said they are looking to relocate that to a different location.

Resident asked about kudzu growing on powerlines; City Manager Towarnicki said it would depend on if it is a City owned line versus Comcast, CenturyLink, etc.

Resident asked about the CenturyLink line in front of her house; there is a tree growing into the line but CenturyLink doesn't seem to be concerned. Lawson encouraged her to reach out to CenturyLink again. Resident said they have not been concerned about her reports yet. Pearson asked as a City, could a petition be sent to CenturyLink about the various locations of concern. Towarnicki said CenturyLink has very little presence in the City and tend to not respond to requests often. Officer Bell said most of the work is done by contractors in Martinsville, not CenturyLink.

Resident asked if Martinsville has Police officers on motorcycles. Rhoads said the Sheriff's department has motorcycles for funerals and special events. Some Police officers have bicycles and some state troopers have motorcycles. Rhoads mention that the Bold Blue Line will be in town later again this month so residents may see more officers on motorcycles. The Martinsville Police work 24-hours a day. Rhoads also explained "ghost cars" and how those are utilized.

Resident expressed concern about the Corn Tassel and Sam Lions intersection where people do not stop at the stop sign including school buses.

Resident asked about the neighborhood meeting schedule.

Resident stated that weeds on Sam Lions trail are not getting cut. Towarnicki explained that Public Works has a schedule where they spray weeds in various locations. Lawson

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encouraged residents to call Public Works with those issues to ensure they are aware of specific issues in those locations.

Resident asked about barking dogs in the neighborhood and if there is an ordinance. Rhoads explained there is a leash/dog containment ordinance but the full-time animal control position is currently vacant; a new officer will be taking this position later this month. Residents will be fined if they receive multiple calls about barking and residents can take action with a warrant.

Rhoads encouraged residents to always lock their cars.

Resident asked about a fireworks policy in the City. Rhoads said there is a City ordinance against fireworks and officers will answer all complaint calls.

John Christian shared that he appreciates the City doing maintenance on Indian Trail and questioned how to handle the kudzu that is growing into his trees. Towarnicki said if it's on his property then it's his responsibility and at his discretion.

Resident asked if there is any focus on controlling or eliminating kudzu in the City. Rawls says the kudzu problem has been coming up for years. Lawson said there are some areas the kudzu is mowed but it'll still come back. Resident says it's an eyesore especially in residential areas.

Vice Mayor Rawls thanked residents for coming out and encouraged them to reach out to inspections, animal control, the police department, and property maintenance as well as the neighborhood watch members and Council Members.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

Clerk of Council Karen Roberts
Clerk of Council

Vice Mayor Aaron Rawls
Mayor