

April 24, 2017 Neighborhood Tour and Meeting

Martinsville City Council toured the Southside area on April 24, 2017 beginning at 5:30pm. Those present for the tour were Mayor Gene Teague, Council Member Kathy Lawson, and Council Member Jennifer Bowles. Vice Mayor Chad Martin and Council Member Sharon Hodge were not present. Staff present included City Manager Leon Towarnicki, Property Maintenance Inspector Andy Powers, Property Maintenance Inspector Mark Price, Assistant City Manager Wayne Knox, Assistant Police Chief Eddie Cassady, and Officer Coretha Gravely. Mickey Powell of the Martinsville Bulletin was also present for the tour.

The van left the City Municipal Building at 5:30pm, traveled to Aaron Street and the site of the recent fire with discussion of what will be done for that area. A Brownfield grant or other grant options for possible site cleanup was discussed. The tour proceeded to Askin Street where they looked at signage concerns, possibly painting an arrow on the pavement and potentially moving the Do Not Enter sign for better visibility. It was documented that the Stop sign from Union Street was missing. The tour traveled several roads in the City's Southside noting areas of high grass, vehicles parked the wrong direction on the street, a tractor cab illegally parked and a number of inoperative vehicles parked on the street. Notes of these locations were made for follow-up. Neighborhoods were generally clean, houses were well-kept and maintained. The tour attendees did notice several empty or abandoned houses needing attention.

Tour concluded at approximately 6:30pm arriving back at the Municipal Building.

The Southside Neighborhood Meeting was held at Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, 824 Starling Avenue, Martinsville, VA at 7:30 PM, with Mayor Gene Teague presiding. Other Council Members present included Council Member Kathy Lawson, and Council Member Jennifer Bowles. Vice Mayor Chad Martin and Council Member Sharon Hodge were not present. Staff present: City Manager Leon Towarnicki, Clerk of Council Karen Roberts, Assistant City Manager Wayne Knox, Assistant Police Chief Eddie Cassady, Police Chief Sean Dunn, Officer Coretha Gravely, Commonwealth Attorney Clay Gravely, Inspector Andy Powers, and Inspector Mark Price.

Mayor Teague called the meeting to order.

Mark Price provided an update on the property maintenance report and provided residents a contact number to reach him with any concerns. He thanked the Police Department for allowing officers to train and serve as nuisance officers which allows the department to address concerns quicker.

Police Chief Dunn thanked everyone for coming.

Eliza Penn, 1002 Paul Street, asked if there was an ordinance regarding barking dogs, stating her neighbor's dog barked constantly. Chief Dunn advised that Officer Gravely would report that to the proper department. Ms. Penn asked about parked cars in yards and concern for pests. Andy Powers explained if there is no current tag or inspection sticker,

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please contact Property Maintenance with the location of the cars so they can inspect them and serve notices if needed. City Attorney Monday explained the noise ordinance regarding barking dogs, saying quiet time is 10pm-7am and the dog cannot bark continuously. It could help if the resident can record the barking dog then report to the Police Department. Penn asked what Council plans to do with the Paradise Inn. Wayne Knox explained that the City has been awarded a grant that could potentially benefit the Paradise, several people will visit Martinsville on May 2 and 3 to look at the Paradise as a possible office or food distribution operation. A public notice was advertised and residents are invited to attend. Penn asked what was being done with the house on Fayette near Paradise. Chief Dunn suggested they speak about this issue after the meeting

Police Chief Dunn introduced Lt Dawn Vaughn and Officer Adam Parnell who were in attendance.

Carol Pratt, 102 Park Court, asked if there any significance about a blue light on the porch, Chief Dunn explained it's typically a sign of support for police officers. Pratt expressed her appreciation for the Fire Department for responding quickly to an emergency call she made a few weeks back regarding her husband and said Martinsville is a city with an aging population and she's thankful for that service.

Richard Toler, 114 Forest Street, expressed concern about crews patching one spot in the road but not others, specifically Smith Lake Road which is full of potholes. He also expressed concern about speeding issues and suggested larger speed limit signs. He thanked the Police for cleaning up the carwash. Toler asked about the City reversion to a town plan. Mayor Teague explained there is no active plan to merge although the topic is brought up occasionally. Toler suggested a phone tree in case of an emergency in the area. Chief Dunn explained that the reverse 911 calling system is used to contact those residents in the area. Toler commended the City on the tornado warning system.

Nancy King, 210 Spring Street, mentioned speeding vehicles on Spring Street with numerous cars taking that road as a shortcut. King mentioned the house at 208 or 212 Spring Street is vacant and grass is getting very high. Inspections will look into that. King expressed concern for speeding motorcycles which increases when weather warms up. Emmett Street is also a speed problem especially in the afternoons. King shared that there are a lot of cats on Spring Street and Wilson Street and hopes animal control can set trap to minimize the population.

Howard Hairston, South Askin Street, expressed concern for cars on the left side of the road towards Union and if cars are parked on the right it narrows the street for traffic. He expressed concern regarding speeding cars on Fuller Street. He mentioned a play park in Durham, NC area which charges a fee and suggested something like that may be good for the City.

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Resident on Chalmers Street expressed concern about parking near the Chalmers /Forest Street intersection and general traffic flow at that location, presenting a map to Council members to point out the location. It was suggested that the police ghost car could help slow speeders down on her street.

There being no further business, Council Member Bowles made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Council Member Lawson seconded the motion, all Council Members voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:06pm

Karen Roberts
Clerk of Council

Gene Teague
Mayor