

DEFINITION OF FAMILY STAKEHOLDERS GROUP
Minutes from February 13, 2006

I. Welcome & Introductions

Katrina Young welcomed the group and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

II. Recap from January 23, 2006 Meeting

The group quickly recapped the events of the January 23rd meeting, focusing on the secondary impacts the group listed as resulting from having many people sharing a house. These impacts included:

- Trash
- Cars
- Noise
- Crime
- Weakened Infrastructure
- Public Health
- Property Values

III. Explore Secondary Impacts

Stakeholders were asked to elaborate on the secondary impacts to help the evening's presenters further understand the issues. They shared the following:

Trash

- Volume of trash produced by high-occupancy households – are two roll-out containers enough?
- Overflowing trash not being placed in containers
- Need more education on recycling
- 311 will only accept pick up for three specific bulky items at one time

Cars

- More people means more cars
- Cars are parked in yards, driveways and on streets
- Cars parked on the street restrict the flow of traffic
- A lot of cars causes noise

Noise

- Cars create noise from slamming doors, mufflers and blaring radios
- People overflow into the yard and have loud outdoor conversations
- More people can mean more pets; pets create noise

Crime

- With more people there is a higher potential for crime
- People consume alcohol in their yards and then drive to get more – we need to be educated on what to do in these circumstances

IV. *Staff Presentations on Secondary Impacts*

Trash

Brian Garrett of Solid Waste Services (SWS) and Wendy Gigante of Neighborhood Development provided the stakeholders with information on trash pick up.

- The City's municipal code contains a section on solid waste services, which requires solid waste services for all residential properties.
- As part of the solid waste service each home is provided one 96 gallon roll-out cart. A second can be provided upon request.
- Trash will not be collected if, it containers are not placed at the curb, are not accessible, garbage bags are not in the container or trash overflows the container.
- If trash is not accessible or properly prepared, the trash collector will leave a note on your door explaining why. The first step SWS takes is education on how to properly prepare and put out trash.
- In the case of a repeat offender, enforcement of the code is done by Neighborhood Development Code Enforcement. A notice of violation is issued and if not rectified, civil penalties can be assessed. The City will pick up the excess trash and charge the homeowner.
- Bulky items will be picked up as well, but the homeowner must schedule the pick up. In some neighborhoods where there has been difficulty in getting homeowners to schedule the pick up of bulky items, SWS has initiated the "Call and Send" program, which educates homeowners on how to schedule a pick up.

Stakeholders had the following questions:

Q: How did you determine which neighborhoods to initiate the "Call and Send" program in?

A: We keep track of reports from our drivers about unscheduled bulky items placed at the curb. Neighborhoods where this was occurring most often were selected for the "Call and Send" program.

Q: Do you publish your "Curb It" brochure in any other language?

A: Yes. We also publish it in Spanish.

Q: What is the cost of purchasing a second 96-gallon roll-out container?

A: Approximately \$46

Q: Can a neighborhood schedule extra pick up dates if they have a large amount of trash to get rid of?

A: We do have a "Neighborhood Beautification Initiative" for neighborhoods that experience a lot of dumping of trash on public or private property. This initiative involves scheduled clean up days for the entire neighborhood.

For regular household trash we do not schedule extra pick up days. We are one of the few cities in the country which will pick up your bulky items every

week, if you schedule pick ups. We want to encourage people to use that service.

Q. When you call 311 to report bulky items left at the curb (not scheduled for service) do they share your name with the person in violation?

A. When you call 311 you have the choice to share your name and number or not. If you do share your name and number, it is public record so if the violator asks who reported them this information can be shared. If you do not share your name in number it is difficult for us to follow up with you if we have additional questions about the complaint.

Cars

Wendy Gigante of Neighborhood Development shared information with the group on the City's ordinance regarding abandoned, junked and hazardous motor vehicles. Main points included:

- Abandoned motor vehicles are considered to be any vehicle that is left, without approval, on public or private property for an extended period of time
- Junked motor vehicles are those that do not display a valid license plate and are inoperable. Property owners are allowed to have one junk vehicle on their property if it is in the rear yard and is concealed by a canvas covering. Additional junk vehicles are allowed if they are kept in a completely enclosed structure
- Hazardous motor vehicles are those on private or public property that are declared as a health and safety hazard by an authorized Neighborhood Development Code Enforcement Officer.
- To report an abandoned, junked or hazardous motor vehicle, call 311. Code Enforcement will perform an inspection within 3 days and if it is in violation of the ordinance a notice will be placed on the vehicle. The owner of the vehicle then has 7 days to correct the violation before the city can tow the vehicle.

Stakeholders had the following questions:

Q: How long does it take the City to tow the car if the situation is not corrected within the seven day time period?

A: It just depends on the schedule of the towing service. Probably 2 or 3 days at the most.

Q: Would a car with a broken window be considered hazardous?

A: Determination of a "hazardous" vehicle is up to the discretion of our inspectors. It is possible that if there is broken and jagged glass that it could be considered hazardous.

Angie Ivey of Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) shared information with the stakeholders regarding on-street parking. Main points included:

- Parking on both sides of residential streets is legal unless otherwise posted.
- If there is concern about on-street parking narrowing the width of the travel lane, CDOT will examine the situation to make sure that fire and emergency vehicles can fit through the space. If the street is too narrow for emergency vehicles to enter with on-street parking on both sides, CDOT will restrict parking on one side of the street. If garbage trucks have difficulty entering the street, on-street parking can be restricted on certain days during pick up hours.
- Other rules to follow when parking on the street: park the same direction as the flow of traffic, do not block driveways, do not store vehicles on the street.

Bob Vandergrift of the Police Department spoke with the stakeholders about parking on the lawn. Main points included:

- The city’s traffic code prohibits parking vehicles on the front lawn. Parking is not allowed on any “unimproved” driveway or parking pad.
- Complaints are directed to the City’s 311 system and the officers have 3 days to go and investigate the report.
- Usually a warning is given; a parking ticket is the next step.
- Four repeat offenses within the same year can result in an administrative inspection warrant by Neighborhood Development and ultimately towing of the vehicle.

Stakeholders had the following questions:

Q: Who is given the violation for parking on the lawn?

A: If we know who the registered owner of the vehicle is, we will give the violation to him/her. We have also given the notice of violation to the home owner of the house whose lawn the vehicle is upon.

Q. The ordinance makes an exception for “special events involving family or social gatherings provided such events do not occur more frequently than once a week.” What if a household has a different “special event” every night of the week?

A. The intention for this exception is to allow parking on the lawn for an infrequent occurrence, like a Super Bowl Party. If the situation turns into one where it is occurring every night, it is no longer a “special event,” and is in violation of this ordinance.

Noise

Bob Vandergrift of the Police Department also shared information with the stakeholders on the noise ordinance. Main points included:

- The City’s noise ordinance makes it unlawful to create any unreasonably loud and disturbing noise of any kind. Further specified in the ordinance are prohibitions against mechanical noise that impact

residential life during certain hours of the day, restrictions on amplified sound, animal noises and motor vehicles.

- To initiate a noise complaint, residents will call 911. Police staff is deployed with decibel reading equipment to evaluate noise complaint.
- First noise violation typically begets a warning. The second violation results in a citation for \$100.

Stakeholders had the following questions:

Q: I see the ordinance restricts amplified sound over 55db between 9 am and 9 pm. How loud is this? For instance would an elderly person who listens to their television rather loudly be in violation?

A: No. 55 db is pretty loud - louder than a loud television.

Q. The hours of restriction for most of the noise causing activities starts at 9pm. Isn't that kind of early?

A. No. It used to be 10 pm, but it was changed to 9 pm. We think this is a reasonable time.

Crime

Bob Vandergrift of the Police Department also discussed crime in residential neighborhoods. He said the most frequent crimes in residential areas were break-ins and domestic disturbances. The Police Department has no way to track crimes by occupancy, but individuals can look up the crime statistics in their neighborhood using the City's Crime Mapping system online at <http://maps.cmpdweb.org/>

V. *Next Steps*

Katrina recapped the process the group has been through. The group started with looking at the definition of "family" in the Zoning Ordinance. Later determined their issues are not with the relationships of people sharing a household, but with the number of occupants. Next, staff shared presentations on how the City currently handles issues relating to occupancy and its secondary impacts.

At this point, staff is looking for direction from stakeholders as to how to resolve their issues. Stakeholders were asked to complete a questionnaire, which asks them to identify what they think the real issue(s) are and how they would like to see them resolved, given the tools the City has in place.

Responses to the questionnaire are needed by February 20th. Staff will then work with other departments to bring a draft recommendation back to the group at the March 13, 2006 meeting. **The February 27th meeting is canceled to give staff more time to work on the recommendation.**