

Oakland Code Enforcement Task Force

Meeting Agenda

October 19th, 2011

Mission: *Reactivate the Oakland Code Enforcement Task Force and engage more community members to participate in enforcing codes on negligent landlords, housing violations, parking violations, disruptive behavior, excessive noise and underage drinking.*

- I. Introductions, brief new members (5 minutes, Rebekkah Ranallo)
- II. Bureau of Building Inspections: Processes, priorities, and how we can best work together (25 minutes, Brian Hill)
 - a. BBI has half as much staff as they did 15 years ago: 17 inspectors for entire city, 8 code inspectors, they do every ordinance in the city, even those not pertaining to buildings.
 - b. Most complaints are not about buildings, they're related to tenants. Many violations are maintenance items.
 - c. Overcrowding: It is difficult to prove overcrowding issues.
 - i. BBI inspectors are not allowed to touch mailboxes or even contact the Post Office about how many people are receiving mail at a property. University only keeps permanent addresses, which are usually parents' addresses. Any other documentation is difficult to obtain.
 - ii. Wanda: We need to look for other issues (things we can get documentation for) to target properties on.
 - d. BBI back up is being resolved now - 311 complaints were not forwarded along in a timely manner over the summer, so there is now a 750 case backlog.
 - e. Bob McPherson is Oakland inspector, but is spread thin since he also works in other neighborhoods.
 - f. Action Ideas: Targeting Properties
 - i. Come to hearings to make sure magistrate is treating cases properly.
 - ii. Hearing notices need to be published. OPDC will contact Judge Ricardi for weekly hearing schedules and will distribute to the Oak Watch list.

Wanda: What is the status of the demolition list submitted with PCRG/Mayor's office six months ago? Liz Style of Mayor's Office will follow up.

III. Disruptive Property Update (25 minutes, Nathan Hart)

- a. Officer White, Pittsburgh Police:
 - i. Pgh police are severely understaffed: only 65 officers in entire precinct. Zone 4 (where Oakland is) is the largest and most heavily populated.
 - ii. There are other, more serious problems on Friday and Saturday nights than loud parties. There is not time to ID everyone at a party, it would take several hours. They only can shut the party down.
 - iii. Parties get classified as noise disturbances when called in.
 - iv. Suggestion was made to target Oakland parties on problem drinking nights during student move-in and actually stay to card and tag students for underage drinking. This would send a message to students right away. (Semplefest being successfully shut down in years past is an example of this). Officer White can only promise to pass this idea up the chain of command, but is not ultimately responsible for making the decision to do this.
 - v. When an arrest or citation is made involving a college student, the officer notes on the report the corresponding school. The school does follow up in a disciplinary process.
 - vi. Police respond to 911 calls based on the seriousness of the call.
 - vii. Bottom line: there is a shortage of bodies and cars due to budget problems.
 - viii. Pitt police is a fully accredited police department, with the same powers as City Police department. The difference is jurisdiction, and Pitt Police can only overstep this on critical instances.
- b. Officer Bennett, Pitt Police:
 - i. <http://www.police.pitt.edu/>: shows the Pitt Police blotter, NOT university disciplinary actions taken.
 - ii. Pitt Police have 17 officers per shift, approx. 13 patrolling.
 - iii. Pitt Police cannot enter property not belonging to the University of Pittsburgh because it is not within their jurisdiction.
 - iv. In response to community demand, Pitt Police has increased manpower. Officer Benneett will send full report detailing how many people they've added to which shifts. 1,500 approx hours of manpower added, total.
- c. Pitt Shuttles:
 - i. Peggy Sedlack complained that the Pitt bus runs so late at night, wants to know why there is a need for it to run so late.
 - ii. Officer Bennett: Shuttles and Safe Rider run 22 hours a day. They are in place to service students and are for the safety of students. Many students have legitimate reasons to be out late such as studying in computer labs, at the library (both of which are open until 2 a.m.), etc.
- d. Action/Response to Student Behavior:
 - i. Officer Bennett said last week Pitt staff went around Oakland hand delivering letters to student residents about disruptive behavior. They

reminded students of the pledge they took to be responsible and considerate community members and warned of disciplinary action should problems persist. Addresses were selected by the Office of Student Affairs. Contact is Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Kathy Humphrey.

- ii. Nate asked that police focus efforts on party hosts who are making money on parties. Officer White responded that students are selling cups, not drinks. Can still charge with furnishing alcohol to a minor.
 - iii. October has been quieter; thanks for increased police efforts.
 - iv. Halloween weekend: Residents to meet in central location at approx. 11 p.m. Friday night of Halloween weekend to walk around neighborhood with Pitt representatives, media and police (if available) to assess where the problems are and to let students know that residents won't tolerate this behavior in their neighborhood.
 - e. Nuisance Properties
 - i. Kraus' office has written letters to slumlords vigilantly.
 - ii. Nate and Matt Hogue met with Robert Johnson, Southwestern Regional envoy of the Governor's office, to discuss what resources the governor's office can bring, either from the State Police or the Liquor Control Board, as well as how to address violations to liquor control laws that are occurring in Oakland.
- IV. Oakland's 10 Most Wanted (20 minutes, Wanda Wilson)
- a. OPDC to submit list of Top 10 Nuisance Properties to mayor's office each month to track status and will update group at following meeting.
 - b. When you call 311, make sure you get the tracking number
 - c. BBI is already aware of Sophie Edgas and another slumlord with a property at Centre and Dithridge who is currently on notice. The latter case will go to a hearing if BBI does not receive a response.
- V. Developer has put bid in to purchase Schenley High School. Schenley Farms community thinks it will turn into student housing. OCETF should watch this issue closely.
- VI. September 311 reports for Oakland (5 minutes, Rebekkah Ranallo)
- a. Let us know if you make 311 calls so we can keep a log.
 - b. OCETF will send out monthly reports of all Oakland 311 calls.
- VII. Next meeting Wednesday, November 16th, 12pm, Forbes Tower, 11th Floor Board Room
- VIII. Meeting Adjournment

Remember to keep flooding 311 with calls about the nuisance properties in your neighborhood, and let the Oakland Code Enforcement Task Force know when you do! You can submit reports to our email account at oakwatch@opdc.org or call us at 412.621.7863 ext. 27. Thanks for keeping us in the loop!