

Oakland Code Enforcement Task Force

Minutes

July 20th, 2011

- I. **Introductions, review mission statement:** In attendance: Geoff Becker, Maria Bethel, John Wilds, Liz Style, Dan Gillman, Harry Johnson, Lynn Miller, Dorothy Wysoczewski, Ethel Deluliis, Henry Cianciosi, Nickolas Solic, Robert Maddock, Peggy Sedlack, Kathy Boykowycz, Florence Schwartz, Officer Matt White, James Williams, Blair Koss, Rebekkah Belferman, Wanda Wilson, Sam Su
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.*

- II. **Overview of previous OCETF work/data:** Wanda Wilson briefed group on her work on the former Task Force.
 - a. The group met monthly at first, and then, because of time needed for complaints to be processed, went to every other month and finally quarterly.
 - b. Maintaining a database of each property, the status of the complaint, etc, was very time consuming for the former Task Force. Wanda spoke about 311 and her hope that we will be able to utilize their tracking system, so as not to duplicate work, but instead work together through a more streamlined process.
 - c. The group eventually fizzled because of lack of participation. We hope that with the partnership of 311, the Mayor's office, and the Oakland institutions, and all the new tools and resources they can offer, the new Task Force will be re-energized.

- III. **Maximizing use of 311:** Liz Style, of the Mayor's office, briefed the group on how to use 311 for our purposes. The group would like to invite Wendy Urbanic, of 311, to come do a more detailed presentation in the future.
 - a. When you call in a complaint, the 311 operator will give you a tracking number. You can continue to call 311 to check the status of your complaint by referencing the tracking number. Liz will send the Task Force an information sheet on how to track calls with 311 for us to distribute to the community
 - b. 311 complaints can be submitted online, but not tracked online. The City is working to have an online tracking system soon.
 - c. When asked about coordinating calls between 311 and the Health Department, Liz told us that the Health Dept. will not take calls from entities/institutions but only individuals.
 - d. 311 is the central number for all complaints, no matter what City Department presides over that issue. 311 takes care of sending the complaints to the appropriate department such as BBI, DPW, or the zone police commander if pertaining to law enforcement.

- IV. Defining our roles :** Geoff Becker explained that we are trying to organize group members according to interests/skills to better focus our work. He handed out a form and members checked the tasks they will be interested in participating in for the future. Harry Johnson, of Councilman Lavelle's office, asked that we electronically submit the form to him and other elected officials to distribute to their constituents. This may garner more participation in the Task Force.
- V. Disruptive Property Ordinance Education:** Maria Bethel, of the Bureau of Building Inspections (BBI) spoke about the Nuisance Property Ordinance passed in 2007 to address crime and quality of life issues in Pittsburgh neighborhoods.
- a.** In order to officially file a complaint against a property owner under this ordinance, three things must occur: 1) Arrest, citation, or summons to court involving the address. 2) Police must indicate, upon arrest, disruptive activity on a form for it to reach the Nuisance Property department. 3) After three occurrences, the property-owner is issued a notice that they have been declared disruptive.
 - b.** There has only been one occurrence of this happening in the entire city since legislation was passed. The ordinance allows for the property owner to appeal the citation. The owner can show they took action, such as eviction, at the appeal trial. Ordinance is therefore serving as more of a preventative measure. For more information on this ordinance, go to this link:
http://www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/ps/ordinances/disruptive_properties.html
- VI. Nuisance property data collection:** Geoff Becker asked that the group fill out a form of an address in their area they'd like to begin targeting. Officer White would like all addresses sent to him to help get started. OPDC will circulate the form electronically, as well.
- VII. Student/Resident Relations:** Sam Su, of OPDC, spoke about the Keep it Clean, Oakland (KICO) program and how the Task Force can use KICO as a way to better connect with students and engage students in being responsible residents of Oakland.
- a.** KICO Adopt-a-Block students will be door-knocking on their designated blocks to connect with residents.
 - b.** Arrival Survival starts August 23rd. How can the Task Force make students more responsible renters? What is most important information to put on messaging for students (ex. Trash Talk magnets) about living in Oakland and being a responsible tenant? Office of Off Campus Living has historically provided magnets to students about tenants' rights. How can the University and others empower students/equip them with the necessary tools to report issues when they arrive?
- VIII. Next Meeting date:** The group would like to aim for the meeting being the third Wednesday of every month, alternating each month between daytime and evening to accommodate all group members. The next meeting will be August 17th , 6:30pm, location TBA.
- IX. Assignments & Next steps; Meeting Adjournment**