

## Oakland Code Enforcement Task Force

### Meeting Minutes

January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012

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1. **Introductions/ In attendance:** G. Becker, A. Schultz, S. Su, K. Lardas, M. Ballerini, M. Oleniacz, D. Manthei, H. Cianciosi, C. Mitchell, I. Boggs, S. Koss, L. Style, M. Sedlack, N. Solic, J. Wilds, L. Robinson, D. Henson, C. Walz, M. Lake, M. Mallampalli, K. Boykowycz, K. Cunningham, J. Williams, M. White, B. Hill, S. Su, B. Kossis, W. Wilson
  
2. **Bureau of Fire Presentation:** Chief Colleen Walz of the Bureau of Fire gave a presentation on the responsibility of the fire department and fire codes.
  - a. Responsibilities: The fire department is usually called after the police arrive if the police believe that the house is severely over-crowded. The fire dept. should not be called for noise or alcohol problems, which are police issues.
  - b. Fire codes: Codes for occupancy pertain to residents living in the house but do not apply to parties, which makes them difficult to enforce. Codes were changed in 2006: small, controlled fire pit use is acceptable; the fire dept. can respond to nuisance issues such as smoke blowing into a neighbor's open window; burning trash or other objects is against fire codes; sale of low grade fireworks is legal, but anything that flies off the ground or is very loud (M80s) are illegal; fireworks patrol works the week of July 4<sup>th</sup> and can be called; smoke detectors are required on all floors and in all sleeping areas;
  - c. No rules regulate grilling, except that it cannot be done on a wooden porch or balcony.
  - d. Fire codes are easier to enforce for commercially zoned buildings (over 4 units).
  - e. Most off-campus housing is residential, making codes difficult to enforce, even though many houses are considered unsafe.
  - f. Fire escapes are required for buildings of three or more stories; building inspectors have begun to cite landlords for properties in violation of this.
  - g. Window bars are illegal if they cannot be opened from the inside.
  - h. Violations can be reported anonymously to the fire dept.
  - i. If a property is a nuisance, call 311 to build a paper trail. Call 911 for emergencies.
  
3. **Wanda Wilson – Report on developments with University of Pittsburgh Community Relations**
  - a. Pitt is working to provide reports of their disciplinary actions against houses & students to OPDC to allow for more transparency in their processes. The reports will include citations, not warnings. OPDC will continue to update community as this develops.
  - b. Pitt community relations officers do house visits the morning after a citation is given to speak directly to students.
  
4. **Updates on Oakland Top 10 Nuisance Property List**

- a. Give as much information as possible about a property when calling 311, and call every time so that a full record can be built for each property.
  - b. Landlords are given 30 days to comply with regulations after being cited.
  - c. 4504, 4506, 4508, and 4512 Centre Avenue have all been cited and are going to court.
  - d. 3612 Parkview was re-inspected in October and violations were all in compliance with regulations.
  - e. 3113 Hamlet: the property owner allowed the property to get overgrown, but there is no code that addresses overgrowth onto another property. Neighbors must work together – if necessary, a neighbor can cut down any trees or plants that are overgrowing onto their property; no permission is necessary to do so.
  - f. Blvd. of the Allies bridge and parking lot: the property owner had no permit from the city to build parking spaces, but was given permission from PENNDOT for the expansion of the parking lot. Contractors' lawyers never showed up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting with the city. A letter will be sent and they will be cited. The city is working with PENNDOT to fight the parking lot owner in court.
  - g. 3407 Bates: This house was given a 30 day extension at the first hearing to resolve their issue. The 2<sup>nd</sup> hearing is coming up, and a strong presence from the community will push the judge to sentence a greater punishment.
  - h. Please continue to let OPDC know every time you report a property to 311 so we can track the status. Contact us at 412.621.3821 ext. 27 or [oakwatch@opdc.org](mailto:oakwatch@opdc.org).
5. **Other announcements**
- a. OPDC is in the process of acquiring the old senior citizen center at corner of Louisa & Semple from the city. OPDC will continue to update community on this process.
  - b. LED lighting will be installed in Oakland's business district.
  - c. Resident wants to focus next meeting on trash removal and have a public works representative at the meeting.
6. **Next Meeting:** February 15<sup>th</sup> at 12 p.m, 11<sup>th</sup> floor board room of Forbes Tower. 3600 Meyran Avenue. Lunch will be provided by UPMC!
7. **Meeting adjourned.**