

Oakland Code Enforcement Task Force

Minutes

September 21st, 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. **Discovery Stage, address the disruptive behavior issues facing Oakland' residents**

- Adam Butkus brought to our attention that there are disruptive properties in the odd numbers of the 200 block of Neville.
- Matt Hogue said Kraus' office personally writes letters to property owners every time a complaint comes in about that property. He takes pictures to send with these letters and requests that residents do the same. Can other councilmen do this?
- Dan Wood said Lavelle's office did something similar related to trash on Lawn Street last year.

II. **Action Stage, Coordinate the efforts of residents, police, and government officials**

Issues:

a. Disruptive properties:

- o The term speakeasy was defined as houses charging attendees for admittance/alcohol. Liz Style (Mayor's office) warned not to use that term when reporting the problem to 311 because Narcotics and Vice staff handle "speakeasy" cases differently.
- o Property owner asked about noise violations, Matt Hogue spoke about the city's inability to enforce noise violations. He asked how police typically write these problems up. Police responded saying they usually say "disorderly conduct" and have nothing to do with noise.
- o Geof spoke on behalf of Oakcliffe residents saying they witness Pitt shuttles dropping of large groups of students at houses.

b. Violence:

- o Jim Lally has been requesting that Pittsburgh Police put a car on Dithridge St.; no results yet. He recently complained about parties on Dithridge Street and had brick thrown through his window September 9th (Friday evening). Hanson and other residents spoke of similar incidents of retribution in the neighborhood.
- o Kalliope Lardas spoke about her family's reluctance to call police because they fear retribution and are not sure what students are capable of.

c. Peggy asked why, when she submits complaint to 311, notices aren't sent out until weeks later. Dan Wood (Lavelle's office) said he spoke with 311 about this and they said there is a backlog, but you can try to get your complaint moved up if it's especially pervasive or severe.

d. Pitt Police:

- o When Pitt Police issue citation, it goes to the local city magistrate. It does not go to BBI for a Nuisance Property citation. Geof asked Council reps how we can fix this loophole.
- o John Wilds said there is a state law that defines the Pitt Police's authority; they cannot usurp City of Pittsburgh Police authority.
- o City Police has a police blotter to track citations, but Pitt Police does not. Pitt Police said residents can go daily to the station to see this info.

Actions/Ideas/Information:

- a. Geof spoke about how these acts of retribution are a danger to residents and are more serious infractions than underage drinking. We hope to get more police attention to these matters to put a stop to them.
- b. Maria Bethel (BBI) asked if there are consequences within University for disruptive student behavior. Pitt Police said yes, including expulsion.
- c. Pitt student recommended fraternity heads be contacted, but police responded that many of these homes are not recognized fraternity-owned houses.
- d. Wanda proposed brainstorming new and creative ways for Pitt and residents to partner and send the message to students that Oakland is a residential neighborhood.
- e. It was suggested that we get an article in the Pitt news
- f. Pitt Police:
 - o Nate Hart called for more transparency in Pitt Police system so residents can know how many citations were issued and at what addresses. Residents and council called for electronic dissemination of this information to make it more accessible. Pitt responded saying they cannot do that because of privacy regulations. They welcomed community members to attend daily meetings and view logs, but could not offer the information in any other method.
 - o Wanda said we want to know more specifically about judicial processes and how Pitt Police enforces the policies that exist.
 - o Pitt Police phone number: 412.624.2121; they can be reached 24 hours a day.
- g. Tara spoke about looking at issue of safety holistically because the students are not safe in these environments, either.
- h. Residents spoke of CMU's success in combating disruptive behavior on Beeler Street. OPDC Can ask Jen Layman, of CMU, for more information and to attend a future meeting.
- i. Classification of BBI violations: (Housing violations, Trash, and Graffiti); Residents need education on what issues go to BBI, and what issues go to Environmental Services, etc. Mayor's office will help us get a BBI representative at a future meeting.
- j. Residents spoke about ineffectiveness of KICO (Keep it Clean, Oakland) on certain blocks, Wanda responded saying we are forming an advisory committee to change this.

III. **Next Meeting date:** The next meeting will be on Wednesday, October 19th at 6:30 p.m. on the 2nd floor of People's Oakland.

IV. **Meeting Adjournment**