

**Facilitator** Lisa Matthews

**Attendees:** Jimmy Monto, David Baker, Missy Zawacki, Stephen Skinner, Peggy Chase, Ken Towsley, Joe Nicoletti, Nader Maroun, Richard Shoff, Chol Majok, Joseph Carni, Andrew Snider, Jessica Kempisty, Annelise Buccil, Judy Lewis, Al Tassi, Anna Maria DeSosio, Beverly LaBier, Margaret McVicker, Pauline Tucci, Mary K. Begell, Mary Jane Wyler, Tom Buckel, Dan Horan, Mike Parzych, Tony Lambert, Ben Walsh, James Arena, Terry McGovern

Lisa Matthews reviewed the Ground Rules that were posted on the backside of the agenda.

**May 22<sup>nd</sup> Minutes:** Missy Zawacki motioned to approve the minutes, Tony Lambert 2<sup>nd</sup>, all were in favor.

**Codes:** Ken Towsley | *Director of Code Enforcement*

The Codes department is responsible for issuing violation tickets. The Enforcement actually falls under the Law department & Police department. Codes deals with complaint, construction in the city; plan reviews and inspections associated with the projects. This includes anything from a fence to a new student housing. Inspectors deal with permitting process, certificate of use, complaints, housing, violations, electrical, etc. The department takes in approximately 5,000 complaints a year, about 200 – 225 certificates of compliance, 3 families and above and 2,500 rental registry exterior inspection. Codes does not do interior inspections for 1 -2 families; working on getting this changed. When dealing with complaints, a violation is issued & the owner must comply within 24 hours or up to 21 days. Action is taken by the Legal Department for non-compliance. A majority of city ordinances are handled by Police Department; they work hand in hand with Codes. There are no Peace officers in the office. The legal procedure for turning a single family into a 2 family is that the owner would apply for a permit to change the occupancy. If it is not a legal use, you will have to go in front of BZA & City Planning Commission to get a variance. If the owner does work without a permit Codes has to issue a Stop Work Order; you will be issued a fine or a double fee permit. If they continue, Codes will recommend taking them to court. As long as an RV, vehicle or trailer is legally registered, they can be stored on a driveway. They cannot be on front yard or straddle driveway. Zoning has no answer as to whether they can be stored in the backyard. The key is if they are parked on pavement or grass, as there needs to be a certain amount of green space in the backyard. No commercial vehicles in residential areas either.

**Q.** If a new business is opening up, does this fall under your office? 2810 James Street opened a Barber Shop

**A.** Generally yes, Codes will know what they will need to open up legally. What was the legal occupancy prior to its use? At minimum it would need a change of occupancy on file. When you change the occupancy, different codes come into play.

**Q.** On the rental registry, how long does that last?

**A.** 2 years, then you reapply. If you are compliant, you are exempt from the fee.

**Q.** How long does it take to change from business to another and what do they need to do to make that happen?

**A.** A week to 10 days for review process, then up to a month once they start in the Codes Department. They would need to bring plans with them to meet with plan reviewers.

**Q.** 617 Hickson was cited for lead paint blowing around neighborhood. Sold to LLC out of state, roof is sagging, basement windows missing, needs paint job, who is responsible for all these issues before renting?

**A.** The new landlord would be responsible for the repairs. 617 Hickson has been cited for painting all around exterior of the house, with no progress on it. Inspector will be out tomorrow to re-inspect.

**Q.** How many people do you have in your department to deal with these issues?

**A.** 51 staff members and 23 inspectors. We need to get the compliance; there is an effort to put into place a Municipal Violations Bureau through the state. Once the governor signs this they can bring it to the council. It won't fall under Codes, it will be its own bureau that will handle the issues that don't go to court.

**Q.** Out of state LLC owners have to register before they do business, do you check to see if they are registered with NYS?

**A.** If you are an owner outside of the 5 contingent counties of Onondaga, you have to have a property manager.

**Q.** What is the process or vision of how codes can improve its streamlining ability?

**A.** Part is through the Municipal Violations Bureau. The goal is to have compliance 45- 60 days from initial violation being written.

Joe Nicoletti stated that there needs to be an adjudication Bureau where trash debris can be handled through something like a traffic violations bureau. There is a correlation between communities in high poverty and out of town LLC's buy up properties, milk them & then walk away. The City would like to improve that process of adjudication, moving the court & assigning more lawyers. It's when the tickets get into the City hall that the process gets slowed down; there is a need to allow the Law department to spend more time on the more serious problems.

**Q.** There is somehow a disconnect; there needs to be a better solution for business owners who want to do good, but whenever these developers go to zoning or permits or whatever, you are made to feel like an inconvenience. Why can't we get these departments to care and treat people coming in with decency?

**A.** If you feel that you are being disrespected by someone in Codes Department, give Ken a call and he will deal with his staff. Can the process be a lot smoother, yes. Is it going fast enough, no. How to start a business, there is a link on the city website that helps property owners with details on how to do things.

**Q.** Why can't the City cut overgrown grass and put the charge on the tax bill?

**A.** DPW is sidewalk to the street. Sidewalk through backyard is Codes. Codes only cuts the grass on vacants, not occupied. Unless the grass overgrowth gets out of control, then further action is taken.

Residents stated that we should bring back public shaming, such as the signs that were put in front of dilapidated properties during previous administrations.

**Q.** There isn't a block you don't go down in the Eastwood area where there isn't trash along the block, on the yard, etc.

**A.** Anything on the sidewalk up to the property, the property owner is responsible.

**Q.** Sidewalks on Sunnycrest, if the sidewalk is in disrepair because of the city trees growing in the sidewalk, how can you fix your sidewalk?

**A.** If the tree's roots are causing the sidewalk to heave, the city arborist will determine how to address the issue. The City may work with the homeowner to help.

### Committee Updates:

**Business Committee:** Stephen Skinner stated that the Old Byrne Dairy has some life, looks good & clean, might be a little market. Café at the Palace, 'Palace Commons' will open up in a few more weeks with longer hours & a new menu. Free movie showing at the Palace, over 200 people were in attendance. The Midler House looking much better. The Eastroom is interviewing different restaurant owners to find the right person. Jan Nastri is doing a great job on the apartment building next to Dunkin Donuts. Youth group kids on the weekends that need someone to mentor them & they will go around to pick up litter, text Stephen Skinner so he can send out the youth groups to pick up the trash around Eastwood.

**Parks Committee:** Mike Behnke stated that Lowes donated \$2000 worth of pavers for Sheridan Park; the paver project will be completed within 2 weeks which will connect the fire house to the flags & handicap accessible. Twin Oaks & 280 are volunteering their time. Still waiting on the sign for the Obama Rain Garden. There will be a Stan Collela band Tuesday July 25<sup>th</sup> concert in Eastwood Heights Park at 7pm. Dan Horan stated there was a meeting with the Parks Commissioner on the master plan for Eastwood Heights Park; focusing on getting the playground put in & some barriers to prevent cars from entering the park. Gazebo & dog park have been cut from the master plan. Mike Behnke met with Captain Shoff to get crime data on James Street to draft a letter to get funding for the cameras down James Street.

**Beautification Committee:** Evergreen is waiting for the check for the butterfly plants at Sheridan; if anyone wants to help plant up at the garden give Lisa your number. There is a lot going on in Sheridan, the pavers and the historical sign that has yet to be installed.

**Facilitator Elections:** Last month David Lima had stepped down as facilitator, Dan Horan was nominated. Lisa Matthews made the motion, Al Tussi seconded. All were in favor.

**TNT City-wide Board Update:** Jimmy Monto informed the group that the new chair will be Pat Body, Vice-chair will be Mary Carney, Treasurer will be Frank Cetera and Caroline West is now Secretary.

**Issues for City Department Officials** Captain Shoff stated that 26 new officers graduated the academy  
Are there any details on the stabbing at Maires Den bar?

**Q.** Who can you call when there are fireworks going off? **A.** Just call 911

**Q.** How does the police handle the situation when kids trespass and steal bikes, etc?

**A.** Call 911, nothing will happen as the kids will go to family court and nothing happens.

### Announcements

1) Siegfried Snyder, helped with the 5 year plan, has passed away. Small service on June 30<sup>th</sup> from 5-6pm at Goddard-Crandall-Shepardson Funeral Home.

2) Summer Reading Program through Senator Valesky's office for 4-6<sup>th</sup> graders.

3) Is there follow up with the Sewer data collected by ENA 3 years ago?- Minch Lewis has been working with DPW and the County, there are many ongoing conversations with Save the Rain and Assembly Magnarelli's office. No solution yet as part of it is financial.

4) July 29ths electronics recycling at Destiny USA.

5) The Memorial Day was nice; the rain came in the morning but as they were marching it stopped.

Peggy Chase donated \$300, as there were about 5 flag/flag poles missing.

There was a question in regards to the Strategic Planning, if the information will be distributed to the TNT's. Tina Zagya stated that Heidi Holtz & Sheena Solomon, the facilitators for the Strategic Planning, will soon issue a report with recommendations to the board for approval and the information will be posted to the website. Lisa Motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:42pm