

Macdonald, Dan

From: Jay Higbee <JHigbee@bellsouth.net>
Sent: Sunday, April 06, 2014 4:37 PM
To: Lee, Denise
Subject: Well done

Categories: Sent, Blight

Denise,

It is Jay Higbee of Foland & Higbee Real Estate. I have always felt your constituents were Blessed to have someone that represents them so well. I have been even more impressed since you started your campaign to end the blight in the Northwest area of our City.

For far too long, this area has been neglected - and in some cases, abused - by the so-called powers that be.

If there is any way I or my company may be of assistance to you in this endeavor, please do not hesitate to contact me. Of course, I am still willing to assist when you are ready to utilize the property Jim Bailey and I arranged for you to purchase at Myrtle and 11th.

Again, very well done. The entire city and especially your constituents are lucky we have you.

Best Regards,
Jay Higbee
904 571 0041

Macdonald, Dan

From: Amanda Searle <avsearle@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 16, 2014 2:32 PM
To: Bishop, Bill; Gulliford, William; Boyer, Lori; Yarborough, Clay; Lee, Denise; Redman, Don; Carter, Doyle; Gaffney, Johnny; Anderson, Greg; Love, James; Crescimbeni, John; Daniels, Kimberly; Schellenberg, Matthew; Holt, Ray; Brown, Reggie; Clark, Richard; Lumb, Robin; Joost, Stephen; Jones, Warren; Mayor Alvin Brown
Subject: Fwd: City Blight Program Abuse by Code Enforcement
Attachments: day of.JPG; yesterday.JPG; kim scott email.pdf
Categories: Blight

Thank you Council Member Joost for bringing up concerns of overreach on the part of Code Enforcement at the April 8th meeting. For Code Enforcement to be an EFFECTIVE city function, resources should not be wasted on items that can easily be dismissed on an appeal. In fact, ours was dismissed by a supervisor when he came out. This is very concerning to me, as my tax dollars are being wasted, not to mention my time. Thank you again for following up on this matter.

Amanda Searle, Realtor
Magnolia Properties
904-710-5702
avsearle@gmail.com
www.IntownJacksonville.com

"It always seems impossible until it is done." - Nelson Mandela

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Amanda Searle <avsearle@gmail.com>
Date: April 4, 2014 at 10:33:36 AM EDT
To: Bill Bishop <WBishop@coj.net>, Bill Gulliford <Gulliford@coj.net>, Clay Yarborough <Clay@coj.net>, Denise Lee <EDLee@coj.net>, Don Redman <Redman@coj.net>, Doyle Carter <doylec@coj.net>, Dr Gaffney <Gaffney@coj.net>, Greg Anderson <GAnderson@coj.net>, Jim Love <JimLove@coj.net>, Jon Crescembeni <JRC@coj.net>, Kim Daniels <KimDaniels@coj.net>, "Boyer, Lori" <LBoyer@coj.net>, Matt Schellenberg <MattS@coj.net>, Ray Holt <Holt@coj.net>, Reginald Brown <RBrown@coj.net>, Richard Clark <RClark@coj.net>, Robin Lumb <RLumb@coj.net>, Stephen Joost <Joost@coj.net>, Warren Jones <WAJones@coj.net>, Mayor Alvin Brown <mayorbrown@coj.net>, cindyl@coj.net
Subject: City Blight Program Abuse by Code Enforcement

I am writing to follow up on the Ad Hoc Committee Meeting on Blight and the abuse of this program by the Code Enforcement Department.

As I and other residents stated yesterday, over 40 Notices were delivered last Friday in a 4 block radius for inaccurate code violations. In the past two weeks over 100 of these have been delivered in the Springfield Historic District. As I stated yesterday, I walked my 4 block area

*Springfield, Riverside, Avondale, San Marco, St. Nicholas, Murray Hill
Magnolia Properties*

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Intown Jacksonville

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--

Amanda Searle, Realtor, Short Sale & Foreclosure Certified

Springfield, Riverside, Avondale, San Marco, St. Nicholas, Murray Hill

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Macdonald, Dan

From: Roberta Thomas <roberta_thomas@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2014 8:51 PM
To: Lee, Denise; Yarborough, Clay; Crescimbeni, John
Subject: CM Lee-- would you pls assist with blighting element - 3365 Rogero

Categories: Sent

For years, we have had a blighted house at 3365 Rogero Rd, 32277 - - on the Rogero Corridor.

It is severely overgrown, vines and weeds everywhere in the hedge and shrubs for last 15 or more years. Never weeded. Never trimmed back or cleaned up. Code Enforcement does very, very little. This parcel has been turned in over and over for years.

The owner only mows "just enough" footage to escape the codes. Many property owners have LEARNED that they do not have to mow their entire yards to get past the requirements of the Property Nuisance Codes. They can leave 25% or some amount unmowed !! Yes-- they can leave a percentage as overgrowth and still get their complaint "Closed."

Add to this, the property owner never mows the City ROW or City easements on his property. He lives on a corner lot, so he has overgrown easements on Rogero and Diane Rd which are not mowed, cleaned--and the owner plays games, knows Code Enforcement cannot cite him- - but has to cite the City and DPW and get the City to come out here and use city tax dollars to mow the nuisance grass on the ROWs in front of his blighted house and yard. Vines are everywhere, but code enforcement tells us that they do not enforce vines or overgrown hedge. - -- only overgrown grass.

It is BLIGHT and it brings down our property values.

Can you please help?

I even asked Rosemary Wesolowski if she could perhaps get Catholic Charities or some volunteer group to come and clean up the eyesore. Property owner will not or does not clean it up. Trash is often out on the yard also.. Think he is elderly - -but he's young enough to play games and not mow but a portion of his yard- - just enough to get the issue closed...and young enough to play more games and never mow the City Easement areas==and force Public works to have to come out and mow city easement. (while almost every good citizen in the county DOES mow the city easement in front of their homes.).

He had large logs out on the city easement for months and months. Garbage company would not pick up.

This has gone on for years and years. We need more codes or something. Or fix the ones we have. If someone has an overgrown property of any amount, they should be required to MOW THE ENTIRE property so that no part of it, even 5 %, is overgrown after cited. In other words, 100% cleaned up. -- not partially.

Roberta Thomas

Macdonald, Dan

From: Crescimbeni, John
Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2014 2:24 PM
To: Brent Trauger; Lee, Denise; Bishop, Bill; Gaffney, Johnny; Love, James; Jones, Warren
Cc: Yarborough, Clay; 630city
Subject: RE: Curbside Garbage Update

Mr. Trauger:

Thank you for your email.

Please know that I forward each of your emails (and attachments thereto) to the Chief of the city's Solid Waste Division who assures me that he is working on the issue.

John R. Crescimbeni
City Councilman, At-Large, Group 2
Office of the City Council
City Hall at St. James
117 West Duval Street, Suite 425
Jacksonville, Florida 32202
(904) 630-1381

From: Brent Trauger [<mailto:lbtrauger@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2014 8:57 AM
To: Lee, Denise; Bishop, Bill; Crescimbeni, John; Gaffney, Johnny; Love, James; Jones, Warren
Cc: Yarborough, Clay; 630city
Subject: Curbside Garbage Update

To Special Ad Hoc Committee on Jacksonville's Neighborhood Blight regarding the 111 locations of curbside garbage recorded 22 and 23 March:

An update was sent to you by email dated April 18, 2014 at 4:55 PM, same subject, that showed no progress was made at 15 residential sites.

The same 15 sites were visited on 25 and 26 April and 5 sites still showed that the trash was not picked up. See attached file.

Please determine why this unacceptable work by both the City and the waste contractor continues.

Brent Trauger
6540 Heidi Rd
Jacksonville, FL 32277

Macdonald, Dan

From: Shirl31635@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, April 01, 2014 5:20 PM
To: Lee, Denise
Subject: Human Blight

Categories: Sent, Blight

Thank you, Ms. Lee, for addressing human blight. Streets lined with persons who loiter all day indeed casts a shadow on any neighborhood. I can't be sure if it was a result of your most recent efforts, but I did miss a corner bench this week that was previously occupied all day. May God bless you as you continue to work for your district.

Respectfully,

Ms. S. Smith

Macdonald, Dan

From: adorka ville <adorkaville@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 04, 2014 4:13 PM
To: Lee, Denise
Subject: Saving Adorkaville: Your Immediate Attention is Requested

Categories: Blight

Dear Representative Brown et al,

**Re: 5621, 5625, 5747 Dabula Drive. Jacksonville, FL 32219
Via Email and US Mail**

We are writing to you in regards to our continued grievances pertaining to the Jacksonville Municipal Code Compliance Division. We pray that this will be our final attempt in contacting you in this matter and request that you review our concerns in its entirety as we have not received any assistance from our city representatives.

We have previously advised of the many complications we have had and are currently enduring with Code Compliance; please refer to emails sent in this matter through the years. It has come to our attention that this Division is planning to conduct demolition at the above referenced addresses within the next few days. Despite our many efforts to comply with their requests, it is apparent that they refuse to adhere to our many efforts to save and restore the structures. We have also explained to Mr. Danny Connell as well to Ms. Kimberly Scott of Code Compliance that the site and the structures are under review for historical designation by the Jacksonville Historical Preservation Committee. We also advised that while the site is under review for designation it also qualified for protection i.e. 'mothball'.

The Code Compliance Division also continues to send correspondence to the deceased trustees despite the fact that we have advised Mr. Connell in writing as well as in person by visits to his office. Please also note that we have reached out to Mr. Robert Prado of Code Compliance by email and US Mail and also refuses to respond to our concerns. To make matters even worse, our complaints regarding a belligerent code enforcement officer, Eugene Walker, were not addressed. Despite committing perjury in magistrate hearings (deposing a false witness as a resident of one of the properties), the Officer was not reprimanded nor taken off the case but instead Mr. Connell later informed that he had retired. Again, no explanation or apology pertaining to our complaints regarding this Officer.

This is our third attempt in becoming designated as an historical land mark and it is very disheartening that City Code Compliance is persistent in destroying structures in a community with such rich and unique history; it is ironic that information from our application for designation was used in the application to designate the Old City Cemetery where Princess Kofi lies but we were not made aware until later. We do not understand why this division or our complaints have not been investigated but we know this is not an isolated occurrence and pray that our concerns are finally addressed.

Again, we request you review this matter and advise as to what else is needed to STOP this process before we pursue further legal action. Please feel free to contact us at any time.

Thank you,

ARG
Adorkaville Restoration Group
The Missionary African Universal Church, Inc.
Attn: Rev. Williams
5625 Dabula Drive
Jacksonville Fl, 32219

P.S. We urge you to please review the FBI article titled "Former Mayor and City Magistrate Sentenced to Prison for Public Corruption. Date 09/15/2011" as it should shed light as to what may be occurring in Jacksonville.

Macdonald, Dan

From: Melody Shacter <mdshacter@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, May 06, 2014 12:25 AM
To: Macdonald, Dan; Lee, Denise
Subject: Neighborhood Blight Committee

May 5, 2014

To: Councilwoman E. Denise Lee
From: Melody Shacter, Arlington Resident
RE: Neighborhood Blight

At the last Neighborhood Blight meeting which I attended on April 17, 2014 you asked that I submit 10 corridors which are considered blighted in Arlington. I have taken that directive seriously and spent many hours speaking with residents, attending local meetings and driving around the area. I think residents would agree there are more than 10, but here is what I would like to report. Some of the main arteries that are littered with abandoned buildings (some for decades) closed up businesses, and generally unkept residences are; 1. University Blvd between the Arlington Expressway and Merrill Rd.

2. Merrill Road from University to Rogero Rd.
3. The Arlington Expressway from University Blvd to Monument Rd.
4. Justina Road

Additionally the entire neighborhood locals call "Sin City", which I think speaks for itself. Its borders are Atlantic Blvd. to the south, Arlington Road to the west, Millcreek Road to the east and Strawberry Creek to the north. It consists of 10 alphabetically named streets that run east-west, Alton, Berry, Cocoa, Eaton, Free, Galveston, Hare, Jasper and Kona and 5 north-south streets, Lamson, Centruy, Bowlan, Acme and Pecan. Although there are a very few residence that maintain their property, by far the majority is run down and unkept with many buildings that look abandoned and foreclosed.

Please except this report with the earnest concern I have for my neighborhood, Arlington.

Panel ponders demolition for boarded, but sturdy, Jacksonville buildings

Group mulls removal to stem blight

By [Steve Patterson](#) Fri, Apr 25, 2014 @ 3:47 pm | updated Fri, Apr 25, 2014 @ 9:45 pm

A Jacksonville panel on neighborhood blight began considering legislation Friday to authorize demolishing some boarded-up buildings whether they're structurally sound or not.

Buildings that have been vacant and boarded for at least two years, and aren't historic, could be labeled unsafe structures under a draft bill that city attorney Cherry Shaw circulated to the Stand Up For Neighborhoods Blight Committee.

The legislation has not been formally introduced yet, and Councilwoman Denise Lee said more discussion is needed before a bill is proposed to the council.

Unsafe buildings can be demolished by city order.

Local rules haven't allowed that when buildings are structurally sound, but advocates for new rules argue existing laws still allow buildings, and neighborhoods, to decay.

"We've got to create something new," Lee told the committee, an informal group she formed with Chief Administrative Officer Karen Bowling and Sheriff's Office administrators.

The idea was greeted hesitantly.

"If the house is not unsafe, we can still go in and demolish it?" Councilman Warren Jones asked after the bill was first outlined. "... I need to think about it."

Jones later suggested a provision to exempt a building from demolition if its owner has posted it for sale through multiple listing services, saying a property shouldn't be razed if there's an active effort underway to reuse it.

The city can order a vacant building boarded up if doors or windows are left open.

Jay Higbee, an executive at the Foland and Higbee property management company, told the committee he saw examples of vacant buildings downtown that seemed to argue both for and against demolition.

The landmark Seminole Club across the street from City Hall has been vacant for years but is in very good condition, he said. In contrast, he noted that the Bostwick building, an early-1900s building on East Bay Street, is historically important but decaying badly.

Blight is more than weeds and trash

Wed, Apr 30, 2014 @ 1:07 pm

A blight twofer. High weeds and a snipe sign on a utility pole mark this abandoned house at Ortega and Verona. The abandoned house and lot have been a scourge on this busy intersection.

Recently, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Chief Pat Ivey told City Council's committee on blight about visiting with the owner of a dubious local business.

It's a legally questionable establishment, Ivey noted, also notorious for attracting loiterers and suspected drug dealers — elements that cause blight in many Jacksonville neighborhoods just as much as strewn trash, 5-foot weeds and boarded-up homes.

"I told (the business owner), 'You need to get on our team,'" Ivey said, "because we're the ones on the right team."

Ivey told committee members that when it comes to fighting blight in Jacksonville, "You try to create partnerships."

And that sense of partnership is evident as the city's Operation Blight program continues its work.

It has taken partnerships among city officials, City Hall departments, law enforcement, neighborhoods, businesses, a community development agency, concerned individual residents, the JSO and Jacksonville Transportation Authority — among others — just to get this far in combating community blight.

The Operation Blight campaign has already been effective — from holding a successful discarded tire buyback event to clearing acres and miles of city property.

Now it's expanding to tackle new challenges.

TAKING OVER EYESORES

One new task is addressing an odd irony that plagues Jacksonville: the presence of ramshackle, vacant properties that should be cleared as obvious neighborhood eyesores but stubbornly remain because they have so little property value and aren't worth the paperwork cost or logistical headache of foreclosure.

There are 50 such properties, all with assessed values of \$5,000 or less. In just a small slice of north Jacksonville. The city's neighborhood blight committee is working with the Tax Collector's

Area pastor Kenneth Adkins told committee members he's seeking to rally Jacksonville pastors and other faith leaders to begin touring the areas around their churches to monitor locations of blight and perhaps "adopt" specific neighborhoods for regular clean-up events.

Adkins noted that many area pastors actually don't live anywhere near the neighborhoods where their churches are located.

"There's a place for us to become partners in the effort to fight blight," he said.

It's that spirit of partnership that keeps flourishing as Operation Blight's work continues to unfold.

It's one that our entire community should continue to nurture as we face new challenges in the war against blight.