

Greensboro Neighborhood Congress (GNC)
Meeting Notes
Saturday, April 13, 2019



GNC Co-Chairperson **Susan Taaffe** convened the **April 2019** GNC meeting at the Greensboro Public Library, beginning with our traditional introduction of all participants.

Guest Speakers:

Brad Tolbert, Code Compliance Field Supervisor in the City **Neighborhood Development Department**, and **Roddy Covington**, lead City Inspector, discussed our city's 1- minimum housing standards, 2- nuisance complaints, and 3- front yard car parking code enforcement. At present, all of Greensboro's minimum housing concerns are **complaint driven**. A City inspector posts notices of violation on the violator's door and mails violation notices to owners. Contact Mr. Tolbert or Mr. Covington through City Code Compliance Office at 336-373-2111, or 336-373-CITY (336-373-2489). An online Code Compliance Tracking System is available at <https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/neighborhood-development/report/code-violations-compliance/code-ordinance-violations>.

- **Five or more minor exterior violations, or one major violation**, instigate the City mailing the property owner citing 25 days to repair or to have a hearing. If there is no evidence toward repairs, the City issues a 30-day repair order. The property owner can request two 30-day extensions, after which there are another 30 days before issuance of a condemnation notice. The City only condemns a property if the property owner fails to correct the problems. Fees may be charged to the property owner, and residents must leave.
- Our City estimates code compliance repair costs. If the cost to repair a violation is greater than 50% of the value of the property, then the City issues an order to repair or demolish. If repairs are not properly accomplished, there are 90 additional days prior to demolition.
- If persons are significantly concerned about a property's upkeep, five persons can petition the City and a City inspector can enter the property. Individual complaints can be phoned in, anonymously.
- Major housing violations include examples such as open wiring, a falling wall, major sewer problems, etc. Minor housing violations include overgrown lots, appliances or abandoned vehicles in yards, etc.
- Currently there are about 125 houses on the City housing demolition list. If the City determines the property is worth rehabilitation, and if there are rehabilitation funds available, then the City prefers to repair and place a lien on the property. A lien requires the owner or buyer pay City repair costs prior to future property sale.
- Our City demolishes about 6 houses/year. If a house is on a demolition list, a buyer is allowed 6 months to perform repairs and our City works with the buyer as long as repairs progress is evident. Our City has some rehabilitation funds available for lead abatement and moisture/mold remediation.
- Our City maintains a chronic **violators list**. If a property receives complaints three times/year, the property goes on the City's chronic violator's list.

A typical **nuisance violation** is for grass 10" tall or higher, limbs, brush, trash, standing water, old couches or chairs left outdoors, lawnmowers left out, cars parked on City right-of-way, cars parked in unpaved/un-graveled front or side yards, and cars parked on City streets without being moved 7 days and without up-to-date license tags. (In City Historic Districts, cars can never be parked in front yards.) A city notice of violation allows 10 days to remediate nuisance violations. City inspectors follow up on complaints in 3-5 business days.

For **parked car violations**, warning tickets are placed on car windshields. In 7 days, the car owner is issued a \$50 violation ticket. After three 7-day violation tickets, an immobilizing "boot" is placed on the car. If a car is parked on a City right-of-way, call City Police anytime because they have the authority to immediately ticket and tow.

City of Greensboro inspectors are **under staffed and under paid** compared to similar-size cities. We employ 8 full-time code compliance officers and 3 part-time (~20-hours/week) staff. To improve service, Greensboro needs 2-4 additional City inspectors. Our City offers to send inspection speakers to your neighborhood association meetings.

Yuan Zhou, PhD, of the **Greensboro Department of Transportation (GDOT)**, explained **Vision Zero** the goal of which is to have **zero traffic fatalities by 2020**. **Vision Zero** builds awareness, education, and action working with City Police Department crash reports, Guilford County Public Health staff reports, Emergency Medical Service (EMS) reports, major local businesses, and the greater community to **document auto accident reports, observe accident trends, and develop strategies to reduce traffic accidents**. City Police present “To Die For” programs which include simulations of police, fire, and EMS episodes of serious traffic accident situations. **In NC it is illegal to text while driving!** **Vision Zero** working groups meet regularly to help prioritize future plans and review data from police, EMS, GDOT, and NC DOT. Fatal crash data emphasizes the importance of:

1. Reducing speed and increasing driver awareness
2. Reducing running-off of roads
3. Protecting vulnerable users, especially children, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

When driving, please: **Put your phone down! Slow down! And use seat belts!**

Vision Zero’s most effective question is **“Exactly what is an acceptable number of your family members to be injured or die in traffic accidents?”**

Committee Reports:

Treasurer: Betty Watson reports the GNC has \$262.29 in savings, \$805.60 in checking, for a total of \$1,067.89 as of March 31, 2019.

Issues & Bylaws: Marsh Prause reports this committee is discussing how to increase the number of City Inspectors, the City Comprehensive Plan which is to be finished by 2020, and issues related to local property owners offering short-term rentals (Air B&B, VRBO, etc.).

Membership: Gerry Alfano reminds participants to sign-in at all GNC monthly meetings.

Announcements:

- The **Glenwood Neighborhood** hosts a farmer’s market on Thursdays from 6-8 p.m. at the intersection of Glenwood and Florida streets.

The next GNC meeting is **Saturday, June 15, 9-11 a.m.** in the Nussbaum Room of the Greensboro Central Library. Additional 2019 GNC meetings are:

- **August 10, 2019, Saturday, 9-11 a.m.**
- **October 12, Saturday, 9-11 a.m.**

Visit www.GreensboroNeighborhoodCongress.org for information about the GNC, where you can always read notes from previous GNC monthly meetings.

GNC notes are respectfully submitted by Ann Stringfield of the Fisher Park Neighborhood, April 30, 2019.