



PUBLIC
PLAYHOUSE

THE TOWN OF BLADENSBURG

"A past to remember. A future to embrace."



Community Forum: Saturday, July 26, 2014 Bladensburg Town Hall Meeting Focus: Let's Talk Trash!



Forum Attendees:

Elected Officials

Council Member Trina Brown, Ward 1
Council Member Cris Mendoza, Ward 1
Council Member Beverly Hall, Ward 2
Mayor Walter Lee James, Jr.

Residents/Community Partners

Pastor Ken Lear
Mr. Steve Weitz
Mr. Joe Kenkel
Mrs. Lois R. Kenkel
Ms. Chris Melendez
Mr. John Carlson
Mr. Juwan Blocker
Mr. Darrell Wesley
First Lady Takisha D. James
First Daughter Imani S. James
Mr. Stan Dixon

PURPOSE

This Community Forum was held to have a collaborative, solution-oriented discussion on how to best handle the containment and disposal of trash (i.e. traditional garbage, yard waste, bulk trash, recycle) in our community. We were scheduled to discuss parking as well, but there was so much trash talking/discussing we ran out of time. So we decided that it was best to put in place a Parking Standards Committee to take an in depth look at the existing community-wide parking conditions and develop recommendations for the Council consideration.

The following topics of concern and solutions were discussed:

Topic 1 – RATS

Proposed Solutions:

- Community Education – Ensuring that the information disseminated throughout the community and on different forms of media is correct, consistent and frequently communicated
- Ensure that there is proper enforcement in place and that that enforcement is carried out in a proper and consistent manner
- Community members need to pick up after their animals
- Set rat traps throughout the community in the “rat hot spots”
- Conduct a community assessment to identify where the source of the rats
- **Rat Removal Patrols:** Encourage community members to form "Rat Removal Patrols" who will report rat sightings to Code Enforcement.
- **Apartment/Condos/Townhouses - Trash Cans, Dumpsters, and Bulk Trash:** As with single dwelling trash cans, multi-unit dwelling dumpsters should also be covered or sealed AND have an adequate size containers and service contracts to ensure they are not overflowing or over capacity. Often dumpsters are **open or overflowing** which attract rodents and other animals. Ensure that there is proper code enforcement in place and that that enforcement is carried out in a proper and consistent manner. **Bulk trash** items such as mattresses and couches which can harbor rodents should not be out in public places. Complexes need to ensure there is an adequate removal schedule for Bulk Trash items.
- **Commercial/Business - Trash Cans, Dumpsters, and Public Areas:** Trash cans and dumpsters used by commercial businesses should also be covered or sealed AND have an adequate size containers and service contracts to ensure they are not overflowing or over capacity - especially those businesses which involve **COMESTABLES and FOOD SERVICE**. Often dumpsters are **OPEN or OVERFLOWING** which attract rodents and other animals. Business operators should clean areas on their properties to ensure the removal of trash items which may attract rodents and other vermin. These areas may include dining areas, parking

lots, restrooms, commercial walk ways, and the area around dumpsters and trash cans. Ensure that there is proper code enforcement in place and that that enforcement is carried out in a proper and consistent manner.

Topic 2 - FAILURE TO SEND OUT NOTICES/ENFORCEMENT

Proposed Solutions:

- Ensure that our staff is equipped with the tools necessary to enforce and notify community members of standards and penalties associated with trash compliance in the town.
 - To support Code Enforcement officers in carrying out their duties:
 - The Town must provide uniform information across all media forms e.g. website, flyers, etc.
 - The Town must revise the Town Code or revise and/or develop clear policies and standards of containment, removal, procedures for attaining removal (i.e. bulk trash), and timelines for removal, for the residential and commercial community and across departments.
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Topic 3 – CONTAINMENT OF TRASH

Proposed Solutions:

- Provide 96 gallon town owned totes for each resident for additional trash accumulation.
 - Identify individuals who don't contain trash properly as it stated in town code and impose upon them a fine.
 - The Town must enforce ordinances that are currently on the books that address trash containment.
 - Town Code should be update and consistent with the current Prince George's County Code.
 - Town should hire more code officers and consider code foot patrol
 - Have code staff to work staggered times and also on weekends
 - Have the Police Department to work more closely and in conjunction with Code in identifying and submitting code violations
 - Clearly outline for the community (**both residential and COMMERCIAL**) different types of containment
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Topic 4 - ONE DAY PICKUP

Proposed Solutions:

- The implementation of new contract in August 2015.
- Recycling Education Campaign: Educate community members on different types of recycling, materials that can be recycled and recycling depots for non-county pick-up (i.e. electronics). This may help to diminish the amount of garbage filling Town trash containers.

Topic 5 - SIZE OF TRASH CONTAINERS

Proposed Solutions:

- Neighbors helping neighbors, especially the elderly and disabled
- Consider having different size trash cans
- Youth involvement in helping with assisting those in need
- Multi-unit Housing and Commercial/Business need to have adequate size containers and/or collection schedules to ensure that uncollected trash is remains sealed until collected.

Topic 6 - YARD WASTE NOT BEING HANDLED PROPERLY BY THE STAFF

Proposed Solutions:

- Ensure that staff understands the code regarding yard waste and that they are picking it up consistently when it is scheduled.
- Don't rack leaves in to street curb. Only use paper leaf bags not plastic bags. Don't leave leaves in the yard; they can become breeding and nesting areas for rodents.

Topic 7 - DIFFERENT INFO ON WEBSITE VERSUS WHAT IS SHARED IN THE TOWN'S PRINTED MATERIALS

Proposed Solutions:

- Work with a student intern from a local university or high school to update information
- Hire a full time administrative assistant **with the following skills: Website publishing & management, MOBILE website publishing & management, desktop publishing, PowerPoint, Photoshop, PDFs creation, etc. and ability to manage multimedia venues - Website, mobile website, social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.), cable channel, email blasts, newsletter, flyers, brochures, etc.**

Topic 8 – APARTMENT BUILDING (HOW THEY DISPOSE THEIR TRASH/UNWANTED ITEMS COMMERCIAL AREAS

Proposed Solutions:

- Discussing concern with property manager for where the violation exist
- Hold trash items out of plan view, while waiting for scheduled pick up
- Have town code regarding apartment building disposal of trash

- Discuss with property management about the possibility of increasing the frequency of bulk trash pickup for their apartment/commercial complex.
 - **Multi-Unit Complexes:** Return to practice of Town holding mandatory monthly meetings of Multi-Unit building managers to discuss trash related issues, clarify town code and policies, and disseminate information to managers so that they can advise building owners and residents in their complexes.
 - **Commercial:** Education of Business Owners/Commercial Areas of appropriate waste disposal.
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Topic 9 - HOW VISITORS ARE DISPOSING OF THEIR TRASH AS THEY PASS THROUGH

Proposed Solutions:

- Increase signage regarding littering (and the fine violators)
 - Putting blurbs in newsletters regarding proper ways to dispose of trash
 - Businesses having adequate trash cans/service vendors to clean parking lots
 - Put trash can at high traffic area such as bus stops, Sunnybrook entrance by mailbox, common town areas, town green, etc.
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Topic 10 – TOWN BULK TRASH PICK-UP

Proposed Solutions:

- Update website with the correct call in number
- Share information via informational videos on the town’s YouTube channel
- Share the information with schools as a resource for teachers

Recycling:

- Education Campaign: Educate community members on different types of recycling, materials that can be recycled and recycling depots for non- county pick-up (i.e. electronics). This may help to diminish the amount of garbage filling Town trash containers.
- *Town Code: Revise the Town Code to require recycling.*
- Town Departments: Practice recycling in town facilities, install recycling containers in the Town's parks.

Education Campaigns:

- Comprehensive waste disposal education campaigns covering waste disposal, recycling, and town beautification:

Resident Education

- Single Family Dwellings

- Multi-unit: Apartments, Townhouses/Condos

Commercial/Business

Schools

Town Media:

- Develop town education materials both printed, web published, and VIDEO (on website and YouTube). Video campaign materials can be used as teaching materials in the local schools and the Community Center.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY A CONCERNED COMMUNITY RESIDENT:

Topic 1 - RATS

1. Don't leave trash cans at curb, sidewalk, or inside fence beside curb or sidewalk. Move trash can to site next to house. Some people leave trash cans by the street all week.
2. Clean up trash on ground after trash pick up and in your yard and in front of your house.
3. Don't use indoor furniture like upholstered couches and chairs outdoors in yard or porch. They provide a nesting place for rodents.
4. Give residents trash instruction sheets with list of phone numbers and email addresses for public works bulk pick up and code etc. to answer any questions.

Topic 2 SEND OUT NOTICES

1. Print notices in English and Spanish.
2. Instruct residents they must follow trash instructions or they may be fined.

Topic 3 CONTAINMENT OF TRASH

1. Make sure every resident has a heavy duty trash can with hinged lid from town. Rats can't chew through the heavy duty can, like they can chew through the regular trash cans from home depot.
2. After Town trash cans are given out instruct residents they can't leave garbage in plastic bags on street. All garbage must be in sealed trash cans. Dogs & cats tear open plastic bags and attracts rats.
3. Tell residents if they already have a heavy duty town trash can and don't need another one, tell the town so that town trash cans can be given to another resident who needs more cans.

Topic 10 BULK TRASH PICK UP

1. Give residents printed instruction in English and Spanish for proper bulk trash pick up. Bulk items like appliances, mattresses etc should be put out only the day before pick up on the 3rd Saturday of each month. Resident must call public works to schedule pick up. Appliance insulation, furniture and mattresses provide a nesting place for rodents. Mattresses etc are currently being left outside for months and not being picked up.
2. Code enforcement patrol and watch yards for trash problems and bulk items left in yard. Most problems and bulk items can easily be seen from the street when you drive by.
3. Give residents written notice in English & Spanish when they leave bulk items outside that they must follow proper procedure and call public works for bulk item pick up or they may be fined. Give list of addresses that need bulk pick up and have public works report address to code if they don't pick up bulk items.

Thank you for your help in resolving this trash problem.