

Code Enforcement Update

Date: 07-05-2023

To: Daniel Buchholtz

From: Walter Morris, Code Enforcement, Fire Inspector, Rental Housing Inspector

Subject: Looking to minimize resident frustrations regarding code enforcement.

Considering the consistent complaints received regarding certain code violations, I'm hopeful that City Council will consider moving toward a more proactive code enforcement model. I have contacted our neighboring cities Code Enforcement Departments to gain a better understanding of how they handle code enforcement. I believe we can make minor changes to our code enforcement that will benefit the majority of our residents.

Our neighbors (Blaine, Fridley, Coon Rapids & Mounds View) provide proactive code enforcement at the discretion of the code enforcement officers in each city. The Cities of Blaine, Fridley and Coon Rapids have full time proactive code enforcement. I don't believe these models work as well nor do they provide the residents of Spring Lake Park with code enforcement that focuses on the true nuisances that are commonly reported.

Mounds View's inspector utilizes a hybrid of both proactive for the more obvious violations (unnecessary clutter/junk, parking on lawns, poorly maintained homes, etc.) while utilizing reactive code enforcement for less-frequently received complaints such as garbage cans left out in public view or in proper storage in rear yards not readily visible from the right-of-way. I also agree with enforcing code on the city block in which a complaint is received, for example we receive a complaint for the 300-block of Manor, if similar violations are present at other homes on the same block they also receive corrective orders. This helps focus our efforts toward troubled areas and/ or pockets within the City while ensuring that no one resident is being singled out by an upset neighbor.

My proposed solution is to provide our residents with Code Enforcement that better suits their expectations. Proactive code enforcement on the codes attached, while utilizing reactive for all other violations with the precedent of enforcing similar code violations present on the same city block. I believe this will alleviate tensions felt by some residents when they feel the City is intentionally refraining from intervening when we are aware of violations. I also believe the working knowledge that code enforcement will be looking at the block as a whole may deter complaints out of spite or frustration.

This change will allow Code Enforcement to provide as much code enforcement as time allows with the combination roles for Building Official, Fire Marshal, and Code Enforcement Director, Baker along with Firefighter, Code Enforcement, Fire Inspector, and Rental Housing inspector for myself. I understand that we have periods of time in which it may be difficult to spend hours each day providing code enforcement, however, this does allow us to ensure a minimum standard is being upheld throughout the city.

Thank you for your consideration,

Walter Morris