Office of the Town Manager	**Warrenton Town Council**
Frank Cassidy	Carter Nevill, Mayor

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Frank Cassidy

Warrenton Town Council
Carter Nevill, Mayor
Heather Sutphin, Ward 1
William Semple, Ward 2
Brett Hamby, Ward 3
James Hartman, Ward 4 Vice Mayor
Eric Gagnon, Ward 5
Paul Mooney, At Large
David McGuire, At Large

STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date:	December 10, 2024
Agenda Title:	Town Code Text Amendment to Update Sections 4-1, 4-33, 4-61 and 4-62 of the Town Code.
Requested Action:	Public Hearing
Department / Agency Lead:	Community Development
Staff Lead:	Hunter Digges, Building Official

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Warrenton serves its residents by fostering the health, safety and welfare of the community, while striving to be good stewards of resident tax dollars spent in every citizen's best interest to preserve the uniqueness that is Warrenton. In doing so, the Town promotes its unique Historic District and the strong cultural and architectural character of its built environment. The Town's building and property maintenance laws, codes, and regulations are intended to curb neglect, to ensure tenant and public safety, to preserve the community's historic heritage, and to support the enforcement of Historic District design guidelines, while also recognizing that the deterioration of the Town's built environment can lead to the loss of tourism revenue, declining property values, and failure to uphold the Historic Resources goals of Plan Warrenton 2040 to preserve the place making features that continue to give the Town its unique identity, character, and its feeling of home. Town staff continues to focus on enforcement of appropriate building safety and property maintenance codes that will address highly visible and important historic and architectural assets within the Town's Historic District as well as properties throughout the Town. The Town's commitment to the integrity of the Historic District and protection and safety of its citizens in support of the enforcement of Warrenton's Building and Property Maintenance Codes.

Virginia Code § 36-106 allows the Town Of Warrenton to impose civil penalties for Uniform Statewide Building Code violations; and Virginia Code § 15.2-1115 empowers the Town of Warrenton to "compel…the razing or repair of all unsafe, dangerous or unsanitary public or private buildings, walls or structures which constitute a menace to the health and safety of the occupants thereof or the public," to abate the nuisance itself if the responsible party fails to do so after reasonable notice, and to "collect the cost thereof from the owner or owners, occupant or occupants of the property affected in any manner provided by law for the collection of state or local taxes. Staff has worked with the Town Attorney's firm to update the enforcement provisions to be in line with the State Code.

BACKGROUND

Property Maintenance and Building Code enforcement has been a challenge for staff. During the last year, there has been a major influx in the number of complaints regarding property maintenance which has left staff struggling to gain compliance with how the current code is written. The current code makes enforcement against unsafe, dangerous, or unsanitary buildings difficult. With the proposed text

amendment, the town will be able to impose civil penalties through General District Court and have the ability to raze or repair all unsafe, dangerous or unsanitary public or private buildings, walls or structures which constitute a menace to the health and safety of the occupants thereof or the public.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Town Council hold a public hearing to discuss the text amendment.

Service Level/Collaborative Impact

Adoption of the Town Code Text Amendment allows the Town to enforce the Uniform Statewide Building Code and Property Maintenance code more efficiently.

Fiscal Impact

A fiscal impact analysis has not been conducted.

Legal Impact

Adoption of the Town Code amendment may help streamline penalties and enforcement for Building Code and Property Maintenance Violations.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Text Amendment