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Code Enforcement Transparency and Accountability

October 26, 2021

Chuck Warbington, PE

City Manager, City of Lawrenceville

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Agenda:

1. Definition of Code Enforcement
2. Is this a Code Enforcement violation?
3. Outline some Residential/Commercial Trends in Code Enforcement
4. Outline Specific City of Lawrenceville Code Enforcement Issues
5. Innovated Code Enforcement Initiatives

Definition: Code Enforcement

The *detection, investigation, enforcement, and prevention* of violations of statutes or ordinances regulating *public health, safety, business activities, property maintenance, building standards, and landuse*.

GOAL: COMPLIANCE

What is a Code Violation?

Its Simple, Right……

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Managing Mayor and Council

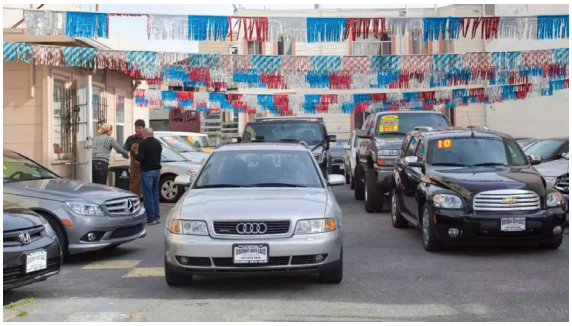
- "There's a toilet adjacent to the road… how long will it take Code Enforcement to find it?"
- "I am going to hold my list of violations for 60 days to determine if Code Enforcement is active enough"
- "This home has not raked its leaves in several months. They need a violation"
- "We need to provide a mandatory orientation on property maintenance every time a new property owner moves into the City and requests utilities to be turned on"
- "I want to double the number of Code Enforcement officers"

Residential Trends in City of Lawrenceville:

1. Vehicles
   a. Multiple cars parked on the property
   b. Parking in the street
   c. Parking on the grass
   d. Inoperable cars
2. Property maintenance issues
   a. High grass
   b. Gutters/shutters in disrepair
   c. Painting/Mold on house
3. # of families living in the residence
4. Illegal construction
   a. Enclosed garages
   b. Decks
   c. Fencing
   d. Paving
   e. Aux. Buildings
5. Outdoor storage
6. Commercial business run out of home

Commercial Trends :

1. Illegal Construction
2. Illegal uses per zoning
3. Outdoor storage
4. Color of building
5. Signage
   a. Permanent
   b. Temporary
   c. Window



Specific City of Lawrenceville Issues:

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1. Manage Expectations –
   - What is a violation? (diverse community)
   - How long it takes for compliance
2. Where do Code Enforcement Officers reside:
   - Police vs Planning and Development
3. Boarding Houses
   - Large family vs multiple tenants (How do you investigate)
4. Community largely made up of no or expired HOAs
5. Rental
6. Municipal judge change
7. Street parking
8. Legacy issues – ordinances not enforced in the past
9. Homeowner/Tenant not physically capable of addressing violations
10. Post Office Property Maintenance Issues – exempt??

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Innovative Ideas – City of Lawrenceville

1. Improve Education, Communication and Transparency

- Code Enforcement Officer present for all City Outreach events – (ie Town Hall)
- Provide Online Reporting (including anonymous)
- Utility Insert Reminders
- Provide property management flyer to anyone requesting a new utility account
- Provide real time reporting to the Public - website dashboard on City Website

- **Gutters** should be cleaned and debris disposed of by your sanitation company.
- **Pressure Wash** mold / mildew from exterior of home, including front entry stoops, driveways and walkways.
- Check **Fences/Decks** for needed repairs/replacement/staining.
- Replace/repair/paint **Shutters** for a uniform look.
- Perform routine maintenance on **Exterior Paint** to alleviate more expensive repairs due to wood rot and water infiltration. This also creates great curb appeal and often appreciates home value.
- Check home for **Wood Rot**, making repairs as needed, and painting surfaces to prevent further deterioration.
- Mow and maintain lawns; prune trees and shrubs. Perform routine spring **Landscaping**, ensuring a better lawn as you move into the growing season. Please bag and dispose of yard debris through your sanitation company.

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Code Enforcement

Friendly reminders

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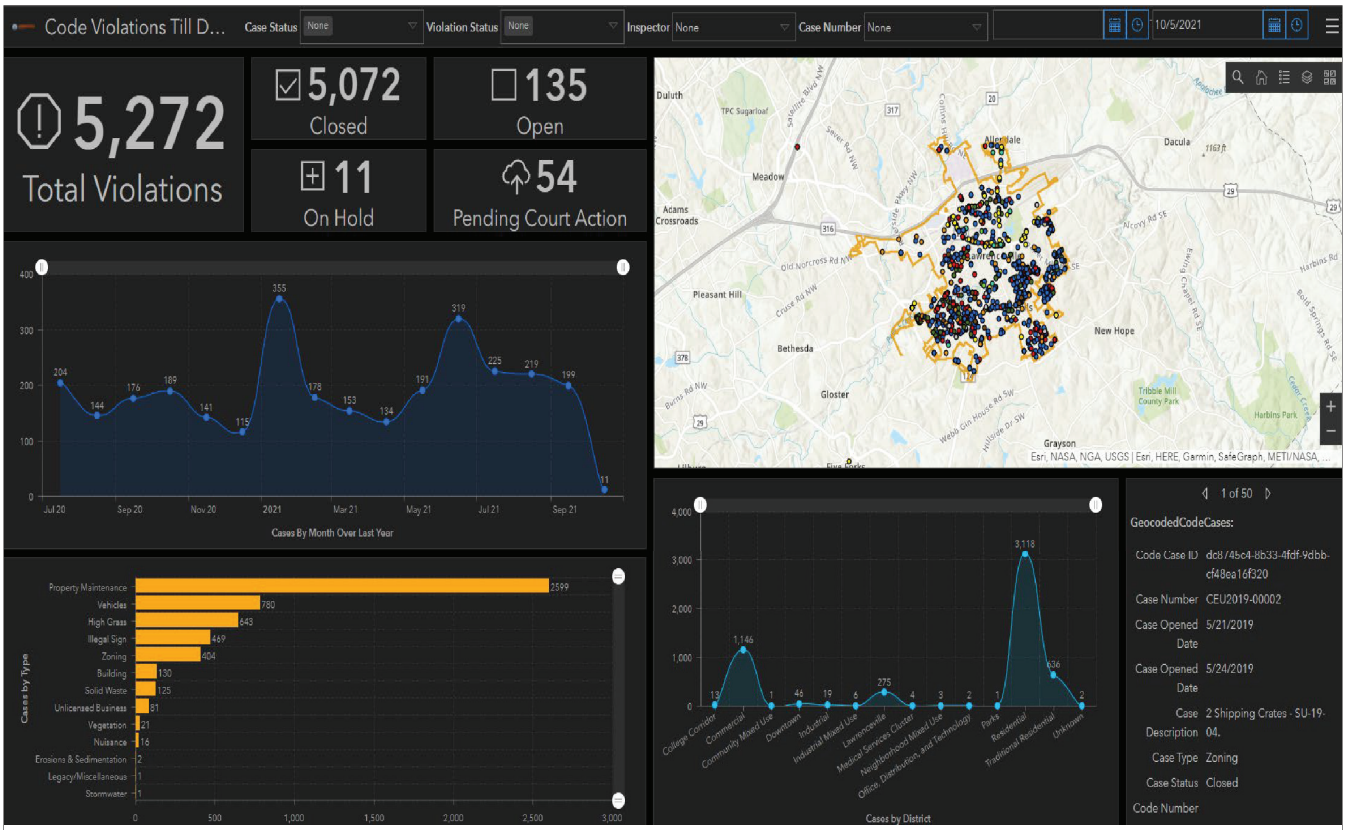

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Innovative Ideas – City of Lawrenceville

1. **Improve Education, Communication and Transparency**
2. **Strategic Targeted Community Engagement/Enforcement**
    1. "Mini Sweeps" –
        - All hands on deck for a entire neighborhood sweep - where a specific area or neighborhood needs attention (politically).
    2. "Quarterly Neighborhood" Sweep
        - Large detailed review of all properties in the neighborhood
        - Cleanup Dumpster event – Code Officers, Street and Sanitation employees, Police, and Elected Officials
        - Citation issued if violations not address after Dumpster Event

Innovative Ideas – City of Lawrenceville

1. **Improve Education, Communication and Transparency**
2. **Strategic Targeted Community Engagement/Enforcement**
3. **Community Help to address Code Issues for Veterans/Disabled/Elderly**
    - Community HOME Investment Program "CHIP" – Partnership with DCA and Gwinnett Housing Corporation
    - "Brush with Kindness" – Partnership with Gwinnett Habitat for Humanity
    - Local Men's and Youth Groups – Faith Based Ministries

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Georgia Department of Community Affairs

GWINNETT HOUSING CORPORATION

Through the Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP), the Gwinnett Housing Corporation (GHC) can assist with various home repairs. GHC received City of Lawrenceville and Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) funds to assist up to ten (10) homeowners in Lawrenceville whose homes don't meet local code or are in need of significant repair to make them livable. GHC is a local nonprofit that specializes in residential rehabilitation. For more information, you can contact the CHIP Program Administrator, Denise Kleinman, 470-361-1070, or email her at denise@lhainfo.com

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Innovative Ideas – City of Lawrenceville

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Gwinnett Habitat for Humanity®

Habitat for Humanity's "A Brush With Kindness" (ABWK) program, is a home repair ministry program offered through Gwinnett /Walton Habitat for Humanity that provides services to help keep homes safe, dry, accessible, and compliant for residents. ABWK helps to provide interior and/or exterior needed repairs, and home maintenance for low to moderate income homeowners. Volunteer teams work to improve the condition of homes by painting, landscaping and performing minor interior/ exterior repairs. If selected, homeowners are required to participate in the project as they are physically able and volunteer in a cooperative effort called sweat equity.

Innovative Ideas – City of Lawrenceville

1. **Improve Education, Communication and Transparency**
2. **Strategic Targeted Community Engagement/Enforcement**
3. **Community Help to address Code Issues for Veterans/Disabled/Elderly**
4. **Logistical Improvements:**
   - Eliminate "Notice of Violation" for repeat offenders – straight to citation
   - Aggressive use of Nuisance Abatement Ordinance
   - Staggered times for staff: late daily and weekend hours
   - Property owners responsible for urban campers – outdoor storage
   - Once a year targeted focus on street parking – with media involved
   - Scrub ordinances yearly to keep it fresh
   - City Manager weekly review of police reports to coincide with code enforcement issues
   - Document (with pictures) all signs for Commercial Properties

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QUESTIONS??

Chuck Warbington, PE

City Manager, City of Lawrenceville

Chuck.Warbington@lawrencevillega.org

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