



AGENDA
CITY OF BELTON, MISSOURI
CODE ENFORCEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2024 - 6:00 P.M.
CITY HALL ANNEX, 520 MAIN STREET

- I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**
- II. ROLL CALL**
- III. REVIEW OF JANUARY 18, 2024 MEETING MINUTES**
- IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS**
 - A. Review of the Code Enforcement Advisory Committee by-laws**
 - B. Common code violation handouts (residential and commercial properties)**
 - C. Update on Community Development module/online portal**
 - D. Code abatement policy**
 - E. Ribbon driveways**
- V. NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday, July 18, 2024**
- VI. ADJOURNMENT**

*A quorum of the City Council may be in attendance; however, no City Council votes will be taken.
Agenda posted at 506 Main Street, Belton, MO, and on the City's website on May 10, 2024
– Madison Rust, Development Technician*

**Minutes of Meeting
Code Enforcement Advisory Committee
City Hall Annex, 520 Main Street
Thursday, January 18, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

Demetrius Ramirez called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Councilmember Rob Powell, Dennis Hull, Dawn Thomas, Wanda Thompson, Rosemary Howard, Keith Richardson, Steve Hackett, Robert Miller

Absent: Kerry White

Staff: Matt Wright, Community Development Director; Demetrius Ramirez, Chief Building Official; Tyler Farrow, Neighborhood Improvement Officer; Rex Navarro, Neighborhood Improvement Officer; and Carol Lee, Neighborhood Improvement Secretary

REVIEW OF November 16, 2023, MEETING MINUTES

No Comments

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Political signs

The City's website includes a political signs handout with the applicable codes. Prior to January 2021, the City limited the duration of time before and after an election that a political sign could be posted. However, to comply with previous court rulings regarding the First Amendment and Freedom of Speech, this duration of time limit was removed. There is no time limit on political signs, but there is still a limit on the number, size, and location of signs, as noted in the attached handout. This handout can be accessed on the Community Development's webpage under "Apply for Permits & Inspections" and "Planning & Zoning Guides." We recognize that this may be difficult for some to find and we are still fine tuning the recently updated webpage to improve accessibility:

- Demetrius Ramirez went over the political signs handout that was included in the Agenda packet regarding the size and replacement requirements.
- Matt Wright discussed on how long the political signs can stay up, who picks them up and where they can be placed when asked by the Committee:
 - The political campaign parties will pick them up and it is up to the HOA to decide where the political signs can be placed. The City cannot do anything about signs in private property, it's harder to confiscate. The signs in the right of way Staff can confiscate.

Abatement policy

The abatement process for nuisances (those items listed in Chapter 14 of the Code of Ordinances) may begin after the initial 10-day violation notice period has passed. Emergency items, such as abandoned iceboxes or open structures, are subject to only 24-hour notice prior to abatement as they pose a public safety hazard. Historically, staff has abated both high weeds/grass and junk/trash/debris nuisances. Once abatements have been completed by a third-party contractor, the City pays the contractor, sends

a bill to the property owner in the amount of the abatement plus lien recording fees, and records a lien at Cass County. The bill must be paid before the lien will be released. Some junk/trash/debris abatements can have significant costs. Tickets are generally issued concurrently with an abatement notice:

- Demetruis Ramirez gave a summary of the Abatement policy and procedures (Chapter 14 (Nuisances). Helpful links were included in the agenda packet.
- Wanda Thompson asked how many Third-Party Contractors we had and how much abatement cost we have incurred:
 - We currently have one contractor. Last Spring, we had an RFP out for bids for abatements. There were two Contractors interested and one Contractor decided not to pursue. The City has incurred about \$90,000 in abatements for this budgeted year, which ends at the end of March and the City has allowed for abatements of \$100,000.
- Demetrius Ramirez discussed with the Committee with the following:
 - Codes department getting quotes on bigger projects first before deciding to abate.
 - Staff is in contact with the Cass County Sheriff's Office on those being evicted and that he will receive an alert prior to the date of the eviction. Staff will then meet with the Sheriff's Office at the time of the eviction and will allow 24 hours before we would send out a violation notice if necessary.

Property maintenance enforcement

The City has adopted the 2018 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC), with local amendments. Local amendments can be viewed in [Unified Development Code, Sec. 10-138](#). As the 2018 IPMC is copyrighted it can only be accessed through the International Code Council (ICC) online, subject to payment, or by purchasing the book through their website. Staff maintains multiple copies, which may be requested to be viewed at the Annex but cannot be removed nor copied.

Per the IPMC, the Code *establishes minimum requirements for the maintenance of existing buildings through model code regulations that contain clear and specific property maintenance and property improvement provisions*. The Code is intended to *establish provisions that adequately protect public health, safety and welfare, and to establish minimum maintenance standards for basic equipment, light, ventilation, heating, sanitation and fire safety*.

- Demetrius Ramirez reviewed the most IPMC common violations Staff uses.
- Council Member Rob Powell asked which Codes we use between the UDC or IPMC.
 - The IPMC is used with some exceptions of using the UDC. The IPMC is used with most cities.

OTHER DISCUSSIONS

Other items that were brought forward by the Committee for discussion, including:

- Firework Signs:
 - Only firework tent operators with firework permits are allowed to put up signs in Belton. There are 6 tent operators allowed in the City and they are permitted by the Fire department for Firework tents only but does not allow permit for signs. We are proposing to do away with the sign permit due to the signs are usually up for 7 days. Per Code there is 1 firework sign per tent but there are some putting out signs on other

properties and at certain intersections directing to their site. This is not a problem if it does not create a traffic hazard.

- Councilmember Rob Powell asked if signs were randomly showing up from another city in Belton how it is handled.
 - Codes will be updating later this year with clarification if it would be the property or business owners' responsibility.
- Dennis Hull inquired if business owners need to have a Belton business license for their signs.
- Snow Removal
 - Councilmember Rob Powell read an email that he forwarded to the Committee about snow removal and wanted to know if Staff leaves door hangers. Staff does not leave door hangers and he felt it should be taken more seriously. He also suggested there should be some kind of agreement with public works about not pushing snow piles on driveways and opening of sidewalks. Matt Wright forwarded Councilmember Rob Powell's email to Public Works.
 - Matt Wright read the Code for Section 19-107 Maintenance of Sidewalks. It does not mention snow removal and if we try to enforce, he felt we would get push back from the citizens.
 - We give leeway with cars parked in yard due to Public Works snow removal on the roads when asked by Dennis Hull.
 - Steve Hackett had a question about Sidewalk Maintenance of who is required to maintain sidewalks. The Code is written that the homeowner is responsible.
 - Dennis Hull asked if there were grants for sidewalks. There are grants, the City does have some funding 50/50 match.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday, March 21, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Matt Wright adjourned the meeting at 6:52 P.M.



Code Enforcement Advisory Committee
Discussion Topics
Thursday, May 16, 2024

Discussion Item A – Review of the Code Enforcement Advisory Committee by-laws

The current by-laws, adopted in 2012, have been attached for review. These were last presented to the Committee when it was reestablished in November 2022. It's a good reminder of the Committee's purpose (Article II) and the role of members (Exhibit A).

Discussion Item B – Common Code Violation Handouts

Since the last meeting in January, staff has created a new common code violations handout for commercial properties and updated the common code violations handout for residential properties (last updated in 2019). These handouts are posted on the City's website:

(<https://www.belton.org/Government/Departments/Community-Development/Neighborhood-Improvement-Code-Enforcement>). These common code violations are currently being provided to property owners and tenants by Neighborhood Improvement Officers out in the field, as well as included with violation notices. The goal is to inform property owners and tenants on these more common violations to reduce the number of violations throughout the community.

Discussion Item C – Update on Community Development module/online portal

As has been shared in the past with the Committee, Community Development has been working on developing an online portal that allows tracking of all code violations and would be utilized for the rental registration and inspection program. Staff discussed a delay in the "go live" date for this portal with the City Council on April 23, 2024. Staff estimates that the online portal will not be available until at least October 2024 due to a delay in setting up the online payment system. Due to this delay, staff recommended to City Council that the rental registration and inspection program effective date be revised from July 1, 2024 to January 1, 2025. This will give staff additional time to test the online portal, make improvements to the portal, and develop training and user guides. This will also include how to submit code concerns and track code violations through the portal. Staff is recommending that current landlord licenses, that expire on June 30, 2024, be given an automatic 6-month extension.

Discussion Item D – Code Abatement Policy

The changes made in Neighborhood Improvement since last fall are estimated to result in a decline in code violation abatements, which is a positive for the community. The high volume of abatements is too high for the City to only have one contractor, which is what the City had for 2023. Staff put together a new abatement policy that aligns with the City's purchasing policy to select abatement contractors. This policy includes requiring competitive bids for any abatement that will be over \$1,500. This ensures that staff is selecting the lowest and best bid for larger jobs. Smaller jobs (less than \$1,500) will be abated by the lowest and responsive contractor. If the lowest contractor does not respond with a certain period of time or if they're unable to perform the work in an acceptable period of time, staff will move onto the

contractor with the second lowest price. Staff is currently working with 3 contractors that can handle high weeds/grass and junk, trash, debris abatements.

Discussion Item E – Ribbon driveways

At a committee member's request, staff has added a discussion regarding ribbon driveways to the agenda. The Unified Development Code (UDC) was amended in September 2022 to clarify that the entire driving and parking surface of a driveway must be paved to reduce confusion or the potential of misinterpretations of the code. Based on research, it had been a long-standing policy and interpretation that ribbon driveways are not permitted. The UDC amendment was to solidify that interpretation.

There are pros and cons to ribbon driveways, with the two biggest items for each being stormwater and aesthetics. The images provided below help illustrate both of these items.

Ribbon driveways, such as those pictured below, can provide additional green or permeable space on residential lots. When done well and maintained, ribbon driveways can be aesthetically-pleasing and help absorb stormwater runoff, reducing localized runoff and flooding concerns.



However, ribbon driveways, such as those pictured below, can also have an overall negative impact on residential aesthetics if not done well and properly maintained. Furthermore, for those driveways that are used for longer-term parking (and not strictly a drivable surface to a garage) can eventually suffer from a loss of vegetation due to lack of sunlight and air, as well as chemical leaks from vehicles. These unvegetated areas then become dirt/mud, which can have the opposite effect on aiding stormwater runoff. Additionally, these areas become likely candidates for a property owner or tenant to throw down gravel as a quick and inexpensive fix, which creates additional challenges for aesthetics and gravel being washed into the sidewalk, street, and stormwater system.



City of Belton Code Enforcement Advisory Committee By-laws

Article I: General Information

- Section 1. Name- This committee shall be known as the Belton Code Enforcement Advisory Committee. (CEAC).
- Section 2. Effective Date- The effective date of these bylaws shall be immediately upon adoption by the CEAC and the City Council (Council).

Article II: Purpose of the CEAC

- A. The CEAC shall serve as the forum for policy and process development for the Code Enforcement Division within the Community Development Department (CDD) as it relates to Code Enforcement policies, procedures and interpretations.
- B. The CEAC shall foster and encourage development of an improved Community Development organization and the services it offers, and may make subsequent recommendations to City staff and the Council regarding these improvements.
- C. The CEAC shall, with the assistance of staff, hear and address citizen issues where city ordinances, policies, process and procedures may not provide clear guidance.

Article III: Structure and Membership

- Section 1. Representation- The CEAC membership shall have representation consisting of two citizen, or business owners from each of the four districts with a commitment to improving the quality of life in the City, with one Councilman as liaison to be appointed by the Council and serve as the tie-breaking vote only when recommendations are needed for Council. There may be no more than two members at any time that are not residents of the City of Belton.
- Section 2. Qualifications- Members must currently live in the City and have resided in the City for the past three years, or must currently own a business within the city limits of Belton that has been in good standing with the City for a minimum of three years; members must not be related to staff or elected officials; applicants must submit a resume for consideration by the Mayor to the Community Development Director; and members must not

miss more than two consecutive meetings in a six-month period, or miss more than three meetings total in a one-year period, or they will be dismissed from the CEAC by the Mayor.

- Section 3. Terms of Membership-
- A. CEAC members are appointed by the Mayor of Belton.
 - B. Each member appointed shall serve on the CEAC for a maximum period of three years from their appointment date; notice of voluntary departure from the CEAC should be provided at least 30 days in advance if possible.

- Section 4. Vacancies- In the event of a vacancy on the CEAC, that vacancy shall be filled by the Mayor of Belton after a call for applications process has been completed.

Article IV: Meetings

- Section 1. Meeting Date- Regularly scheduled meetings shall be held at 6:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday of January, March, May, July, September, and November of each year. Meetings may be scheduled more frequently if needed and upon the approval of CEAC.

- Section 2. Meeting Notice and Agenda-
- A. ~~The CEAC's meeting dates shall be submitted in writing to the City Clerk by January 1 of each calendar year.~~
 - B. The CEAC shall be notified not less than 10 days prior to a regularly scheduled meeting date should there be a change in the date, time, or place of that regularly scheduled meeting, or if the regularly scheduled meeting is to be cancelled due to lack of business items.
 - C. The meeting agenda and supporting materials shall be delivered to all CEAC members at least six working days prior to the scheduled meeting date; not less than four working days prior to a specially scheduled meeting.

- Section 3. Conduct of Meetings- All CEAC meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the Robert's Rules of Order (current edition). The Community Development Director shall facilitate the meetings.

- Section 4. Quorum- A majority of members must be present to constitute a quorum.

- Section 5. Voting-
- A. Each member of the CEAC shall have the right to exercise one vote.
 - B. Voting on all CEAC proceedings shall be based on a simple majority of those members present and voting at a meeting; the Council liaison shall cast a vote only in the event that a tie breaker is necessary.

C. The CEAC bylaws shall be amended by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at a meeting.

Section 6. Meeting Minutes- City staff prepares minutes for each CEAC meeting and those meeting minutes shall accurately reflect the conduct of the meeting, highlights of activity and discussion relevant to the agenda items, and a record of all votes cast.

Exhibit A

Role of a Public Works Committee Member

Background

The City of Belton values stakeholder input in its efforts to make decisions and policy that are in the best interest of the community. The performance of the Code Enforcement Division within the Community Development Department is critical to providing great services to its customers and it is believed that a Code Enforcement Citizen Advisory Committee will be beneficial towards that end.

Committee Purpose

This committee will be utilized as a vehicle for educating the public on Code Enforcement issues and procedures and receiving input on the services it provides. Each member will be asked to: assist staff in developing solutions to issues and make recommendations to the City Council, help to insure the department is making sound strategy decisions, and play a roll in developing and measuring department goals.

Role

Each member will be appointed by the Mayor and serve according to the adopted bylaws. This public body is a citizen advisory committee to the Mayor and City Council. It is not intended to replace the authority of the Mayor or City Council. There is no rule making or legislative authority associated with this committee.

Each member is encouraged to be prepared to provide constructive input on sometimes complex and difficult issues, and to collaborate with staff to develop sound solutions. New initiatives may arise from suggestions made by members; services may be enhanced as a result of input received by the public either through a member or other means, but the enhancement may be developed through this committee. Council may request input on particular issues from this committee to aid them in developing a solution or setting policy.

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR

OVERVIEW OF PROPERTY MAINTENANCE
CODES FOR RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES



THIS IS AN OVERVIEW OF SOME OF THE CODE REQUIREMENTS PERTAINING TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE. IT IS MEANT TO BE USED AS A GUIDE AND IS NOT INCLUSIVE OF ALL CODE REQUIREMENTS. FEEL FREE TO CONTACT THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AT: CONTACTUS@BELTON.ORG
THANK YOU FOR BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR AND TAKING PRIDE IN MAINTAINING YOUR HOME AND PROPERTY!



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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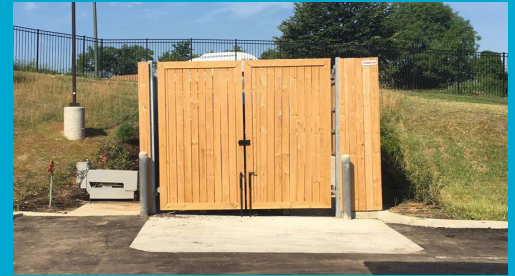
COMMON CODE VIOLATIONS FOR COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

PERMITS OR LICENSES REQUIRED:

- A BUSINESS LICENSE IS REQUIRED TO OPERATE
- ANY CHANGES TO A BUSINESS TYPE OR ADDRESS REQUIRES UPDATES TO YOUR BUSINESS LICENSE
- BUILDING PERMITS ARE REQUIRED WITH ANY BUILDING CHANGES
- SIGN PERMITS ARE REQUIRED FOR ANY PERMANENT OR TEMP SIGNS



DUMPSTERS MUST BE 100% ENCLOSED, DOORS CLOSED, AND IN GOOD CONDITION



PARKING LOTS MUST:



**BE STRIPED AND
HAVE ADA SIGNAGE**



BE FREE OF POTHOLES



**HAVE MAINTAINED
LANDSCAPING AND PAVEMENT**

PROHIBITED ITEMS AND PROPERTY MAINTENANCE:



**NO SHIPPING CONTAINERS
OR OUTDOOR STORAGE**



**PROPERTY TO BE MAINTAINED
BASED ON APPROVED PLANS**



**UTILITIES SHOULD REMAIN
SCREENED FROM VIEW**