



New Approaches to Code Enforcement

Ohio Township Association Winter Conference
February 7, 2020 – 3:00 to 4:00pm



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Introductions



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Summary

- Difficulty of Property Code Enforcement
- Types of Township Property Code Enforcement
- Best Practices – Code Enforcement Process
 - Overview of the Enforcement Process
 - Utilizing Other Departments
 - Springfield Township's Program

Difficulties of Township Property Code Enforcement

Enabling Legislation

- Not Centralized
- Confusing and Ambiguous Language
- Time Consuming Processes

Nature of Legislation/Enforcement Action

- Infringement of Personal Property Rights
- Thankless Process
- Special Circumstance Cases – Indigent, Mental Illness, Foreclosure

Highly Detailed and Legal Process

Time Consuming and Labor-Intensive Process

Repeat and Continuous Offenders

Staff Expertise/Burnout

Types of Township Property Code Enforcement

- Nuisance and Dangerous Properties (505.86 and 505.87)
 - Vegetation
 - Garbage/Refuse
 - Other debris
- Junk Vehicle (505.87 and 505.173)
- Zoning (519)
- Property Maintenance (505.73)
- Fire Code
- Building Code (County)





Best Practices

Overview of the Enforcement Process

- Home Rule v. Statutory Townships
 - Ability to Uniquely Craft Code Provisions and Regulations v. Standardized Code
 - Civil Citation v. Criminal
- Department(s) Responsible
 - Complaint
 - Inspection
 - Notice to Property Owner and Lienholders
 - Trustee Action/Zoning Inspector (Consolidation Resolutions)
 - Township Abatement
 - Costs Assessed on Tax Duplicate as Lien

Ohio Revised Code

505.87 Nuisances

- Notice sent to property owner.
- Trustees must pass Resolution declaring property a nuisance.
- If violation still exists the Township may have the nuisance abated and all costs associated with that action will be placed on the tax duplicate as a lien.

505.86 Dangerous Property

- Trustees declare property dangerous with recommendation of Building Dept. and/or Fire Chief.
- Hold a hearing giving owner chance to fix the property.
- The Township may have the structure removed and the cost will be placed on the tax duplicate.

Township Zoning Resolution

Zoning Permits issued for various types of improvements such as decks, pools, sheds, room additions, fences, new residential and commercial structures, and signs.

Violations of the Zoning Resolution are enforced by sending property owner a violation notice and if not complied with the violator may be taken to County Housing Court.

Property Maintenance Code

Notice sent to property owner and establishes deadline for compliance.

If no compliance is established, a civil citation may be issued.

After civil citation, the property owner will be taken to Common Pleas Court if citation is not paid and/or the violation is not resolved.

Best Practices

Utilizing Other Departments

- Administration/Zoning/DSD
- Fire
- Police
- Service

County Departments

- Planning/Zoning
- Board of Health
- Fire District
- Sheriff
- Public Works



Best Practices

Springfield Township's Program

- Background
 - Community Profile
 - Issues and Response
 - Creation of Development Services Department
 - Township Zoning 2004
 - Township Property Maintenance Code 2005
- Financial Challenges/Internal Consolidation/Service Improvements
 - Multi-Department Approach to Community Revitalization

Best Practices

Springfield Township's Program

-Elimination of Development Services Department

-New Multi-Department Structure

- Administration
 - Reception/Support
 - Nuisance Resolution Preparation
- Fire Department Code Enforcement Division
 - Permit Issuance
 - Inspections
 - Notices
- Police Department
 - Enforcement
 - Junk Vehicle Towing
- Public Works Department
 - Nuisance Abatement



Best Practices

Fire Department Code Enforcement Division

- Department Profile
- Why Fire Department Personnel?
- What We Did?
- How We Did It?
- How Is It Working?

Best Practices

Springfield Township Fire Department - Profile

- Founded in 1996
 - Private Fire Department to Public
- Combination Department
 - Current Staffing: FT Career (30) and Part-Time (30-40)
- Full Service
 - Fire
 - EMS
- Union Environment (IAFF)
- Large Urban Department (4th Largest in Hamilton County)
- High Run Volume
 - 4000 EMS/1000 Fire Yearly

Best Practices

Why Fire Department Personnel?

- Improved continuity and consistency with code inspections
 - Fire Dept. performs fire code inspections that in many instances are duplicative plan reviews as DSD is reviewing the same plans. Additionally, many properties being inspected for property maintenance violations may be considered fire hazards. The Fire Dept. gained knowledge of these hazards and conducted pre-plans that improve overall staff safety.
- Improved Response Time
 - Fire personnel conducting inspections will be in first responder vehicles and able to potentially respond to emergency scenes much quicker than leaving station.
- Succession
 - Command staff within the Fire Dept. anticipated numerous retirements in next 5 years. As a result of creating a new position and promoting others to supervisors, a much-needed rotation is created to evaluate future management staff for succession purposes.



Best Practices

What We Did

- Created New Fire Captain Position (40 Hour Position)
 - Manage Fire Inspection, Nuisance, Property Maintenance and Zoning
 - Manage staff of “On-Station” Fire/EMS Personnel (1-2 Daily) who assist in inspections and plan review
 - Coordinates Code Enforcement with Other Township and County Departments
- Created Roles for Other Township Departments
 - Administration
 - Police
 - Public Works



Best Practices

How We Did It?

- Communication
 - Explain Situation
 - Listen to Concerns and Input
- Created a Culture of Innovation
- Created a Culture of Collaboration
- Created Volunteer Pilot Program
 - Allowed Personnel to “Test Drive”
- Created Promotional Opportunity
 - Union President
- Created Training Opportunity
 - PT Code Enforcement in Other Communities
- Persuaded/Did Not Order



Best Practices

How's it Working?

- Eliminated DSD Department
 - Total Township Saving (\$250K Annually)
- Greatly Enhanced Code Enforcement Process
 - Expediated Process
 - Improved Abatement Rate
 - Increased Resident Satisfaction
 - Overall Cost Savings

How to Make This Applicable in Your Township?

- Code Enforcement Process
 - Enforce and Utilize Available Options as Applicable
 - Nuisance (Consolidation Resolution)
 - Junk Vehicle Resolution
 - Zoning
 - Property Maintenance
- Multi-Department Approach
 - Collaboration with Other Jurisdictions
 - Adjacent Township, Village or City
 - Fire District
 - County
 - Planning, Zoning and Building
 - Sheriff
 - Public Works
 - Health Department

Final Takeaways



Questions

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The logo for "OHIO PLAN" is centered on a teal background. The word "OHIO" is in a bold, white, sans-serif font. To its right, the word "PLAN" is also in a bold, white, sans-serif font. A white, curved line element, resembling a stylized "P" or a swoosh, is positioned between "OHIO" and "PLAN", partially overlapping both. The background features various shades of teal and green, with abstract geometric shapes and dotted lines.