Trustees approve updates to maintenance standards
Keeping our community beautiful

The Board of Trustees approved updates to the Miami Township Exterior Property Maintenance Resolution at its August 28 meeting after Community Development Director Chris Snyder made an introductory presentation August 14. The changes take effect 30-days from approval and will allow for better interpretation of code requirements, modify penalties for continued violations and consolidate the current code to reduce redundancy.

"There are a variety of issues on a regular basis that our staff is charged with enforcing and we try to encourage property owners to improve their properties, bringing them into compliance within the general standard that the community expects in the township," Chris Snyder, community development director, said. "We have a broad set of standards that cover general property maintenance issues, such as the maintenance of the structures, yards, driveways, parking lots, and other aspects of the outdoor space surrounding a residential or commercial property."

Anytime there is a noted violation, township zoning inspectors will directly contact the resident in writing and make every effort to work together to try and reach a resolution before issuing a monetary penalty. A new, four-tier penalty structure for issuing civil citations for habitual violations includes a $100 fine for a first violation up to $1,000 for a fourth violation. Penalties that are denied or go unpaid are referred to the Miamisburg Municipal Court for a hearing.

"Our goal is to never get beyond the first violation, and to resolve the issue prior to the issuance of a violation or a fine," Snyder said.

The code changes also include an updated definition of a junk or unlicensed vehicle that brings this standard in line with the Ohio Revised Code and establishes a new definition of an inoperable vehicle. Updated requirements for recreational vehicles, trailers, swimming pools, outdoor storage, and trash containers are also new to the code.

"Issues we often face at certain addresses include things like high grass at vacant houses that are typically handled through nuisance abatement as there is no one there to cite, and outdoor storage of items like refrigerators and old car parts. These are typically items that aren't appropriate to store on the exterior of a property," Snyder said. "Another frequent complaint is residents who leave their trash cans at the curb all the time. In some instances, we have occupants that have disposed of large amounts of trash at the curb immediately prior to vacating the property. This can become a burden on the neighbors and taxpayers to resolve, particularly in the case of rental properties, if the landlord does not take care of the issue and the items are not properly contained or trash collection service was discontinued by the occupants. The update to the code says trash cans can be placed at the curb 24 hours in advance of a scheduled trash collection day and left out a maximum of 24 hours after collection."

"At the end of the day, the standards are intended to help everyone protect the investment they have made in their properties by requiring all properties to be maintained to a reasonable standard of care. We understand that life happens and sometimes it's just difficult to take care of issues and we will work with property owners to resolve these issues in a reasonable manner. We ask that property owners call us to work through the concerns if they receive a notice so that we know they are trying to address the issue," Snyder said.

Under the township's home-rule authority, the first reading of the code re-adoption on August 14 served as an introduction of the proposed legislation. The second reading at the August 28 meeting was required and allowed the trustees to make a motion and vote on a total of four resolutions outlining the adoption of the code, code enforcement, establishment of civil fines, assignment of minimum qualifications for performance of duties relating to enforcement, and repeal of the old code.

###