



## **Zoning inspector often misunderstood**

*270 service calls in 2023*

Zoning inspectors are possibly the most misunderstood people around. They have a tough job handling complaints about homes and businesses that are not up to code. Miami Township has one full-time inspector.

“I am out in the community every day looking at properties whether it is clear out in Chautauqua or right around the corner at the Dayton Mall. Right now, I have 35 open cases,” Isaiah Ballard, Miami Township zoning inspector, said.

Ballard takes in complaints via email, by phone or online, then makes a daily list of addresses to visit. Complaints include unkempt lawns, trash piling up and downed gutters. There were 270 service calls submitted in 2023. There were 249 violations issued. Resolving those issues amicably before a violation is issued is the goal. For example, a neighbor calls the township about a recreational vehicle parked illegally. Ballard encourages the neighbors to have a friendly conversation first before involving him.



“People nowadays don’t want to talk with each other. If a complaint between two neighbors is managed between them, they might develop a good relationship and continue to do things for each other in the future, but maybe not if they send the bad guy in to ask,” Ballard said.

Zoning issues can take time. While a dispute between neighbors might take a day, getting the grass cut at a derelict property can take much longer. Finding the rightful owner of an abandoned property can be a challenge.

Another example is business signs that pop up on street corners. The signs are not allowed in the township but getting them removed is a process. The Zoning Department works with business owners first, but staff can enforce a fining system should they habitually not comply.

“I understand they are trying to boost sales. I come from a family of business owners. I ran two businesses myself, I get it, but there are things that must be done the right way,” Ballard said.

Ballard says he responds to complaints specifically filed with his office. He does not drive around looking for infractions.



“The zoning enforcement officer is not there to make your life worse. We are there to deal with issues as they come up. Most days you will see me give a wave and a smile, much like a police officer does.”

The goal of the Zoning Department is to make sure property values remain high and the tax base remains strong.

“We must address issues as quickly and fairly as possible when they arise,” Community Development Director Alex Carlson, said. “Our goal is to enhance property values and keep our neighborhoods looking nice aesthetically. It is a lofty goal, but one that keeps the overall quality of life in Miami Township among the best places to live in Ohio.”

To contact the Zoning Department:

- Call (937) 433-9969
- Email [planning@miamitownship.com](mailto:planning@miamitownship.com)
- Visit our website, <https://miamitownship.com/233/Code-Enforcement>
- Stop by the Government Center, 2700 Lyons Road. Office hours are 8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.

---

This is the first in a series of newsletter articles that will introduce you to the Miami Township Zoning Department. If you would like to learn more about a particular topic, please email us your story idea to [twpstories@miamitownship.com](mailto:twpstories@miamitownship.com).