

**MEETING FOR THE
GUILFORD TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES
March 18, 2021**

The Board of Guilford Township, Medina County, Ohio, met for a special meeting at 10:00 A.M. on March 18, 2021 at the Seville Guilford Fire Department. The Guilford Township Trustees were not present.

The following people were present:

- Chief Brad Winter – Fire Chief, SGFD
- James Carter – Assistant Fire Chief, SGFD
- Terry Grice - Medina County Sheriff's Office
- Kevin Ross – Medina County Sheriff's Office
- Chief Don Burson – Seville Police Department
- Scott Phillips – Seville Police Department
- Mayor Carter - Village of Seville
- Ray Ruprecht - Guilford Township Fiscal Officer
- Mike Lyons – Medina County Prosecutor
- Sam Sheffield – Medina County Prosecutor
- Darren Stout - Medina County Drug Task Force
- Mary O'Connell – Medina County Job and Family Services
- Colin Johnson – Medina County Health Department
- Rick Vierheller - Seville Council
- Jonathan Delozier - Medina Gazette
- Shannon Colonna – Guilford Township Assistant

Chief Winter called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss concerns about J & M Traylor Court located at 5222 Greenwich Road, Seville Ohio.

Meeting Notes

- Chief Winter showed pictures of the trailer park. Photos showed the condition of the units in the trailer park and the property, including:
 - Poor signage
 - Poor road conditions
 - Trailers units with unpermitted improvements that did not meet building codes.
 - Units with work in progress
 - Abandoned car full of rubbish.
 - Units with broken out windows.
 - Outdoor wood burners
 - Accumulation of debris and trash throughout the property
 - Structurally compromised unit
 - Raw sewage and toilet paper
 - Shed 'additions' to trailer units.
 - Information board showing license to operate expiration date of 12/31/2020.
 - Aerial photos of the part provided by Chief Burson, SPD
- Chief Winter listed some of the concerns he has about the property and first responders.
 - Residents are making modifications without permitting.

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- Road conditions would not support fire apparatus.
- New gas lines have been run to every unit on the property, not hooked up yet.
- Decks, ramps, and additions have been built without permits, and do not meet building code standards. This presents a risk to both occupants and first responders.
- No permits hanging on windows of units that are being repaired. He is concerned that contractors working on the units may not be properly licensed.
- Unsure if utilities are to code.
- There have been a number of calls to the property in recent year. In the past year there have been four fire calls for burning complaints for outside rubbish. The first complaint for burning rubbish was on April 11 of 2020. The most recent burning complaint was January 27, 2021. The number of calls to this property seems to be increasing.

SGFD RESPONSE TO J & M TRAILER COURT			
YEAR	EMS CALLS	FIRE CALLS	TOTAL CALLS
2019	4	-	4
2020	9	3	12
2021	6	1	7

- First responders are entering unsafe, unsanitary conditions, including stepping in human feces on the floor.
 - On one police response, an occupant from another trailer came out with a machete.
 - They must wait for a police officer to enter any of the units, which is impacting response times.
 - Chief Winter is hoping to see conditions made safer for both occupants and first responders.
- Assistant Chief Carter, SGFD, has been involved with responses and investigation and shared additional information. They have been trying to find out if the owner of the trailer park has a valid license to operate.
 - Mobile home parks are regulated by the Department of Commerce, and it sounds like there is a license valid until July 2021. They may be able to send inspectors and issue a violation but wanted to wait until after this meeting. The owner could be cited for debris, missing skirting, abandoned cars, pest control, etc.
 - The owner has evidently purchased all of the units. If he sells 5 in 12-month period, he will need dealership permit but that is not required at this time.
 - Mr. Carter spoke with Mr. Nelson from the Medina County Building Dept. They do not deal with anything dealing with trailers because of the way they are licensed. Shed additions depend on zoning, but often do not apply.
 - Mr. Carter asked where the Health Department would stand on potential sewage issues.
 - Colin Johnson, MCHD, responded that the Department of Commerce regulates mobile homes, and the

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Health Department has not been involved since 2013. He suggests filing a complaint with the Department of Commerce. They are supposed to have a complaint resolution process. The Ohio EPA handles permits for semi-public sewage systems. He will need to look at the permit to see if the EPA has been involved at all.

- Chief Burson noted that Seville Board of Public Affairs (BOPA) was recently contacted to find out if they could tie into their system, so he thinks they might be aware of some issues.
- Chief Burson shared some details about his experience with this property as the Seville Policy Chief. He has been here 36 years and they have dealt with this issue for a long time. He is concerned about the impact this has on community. Although the trailer park lies outside of Village, the residents are bringing criminal activity to the Village. It is apparent by the turnout at this meeting that the community wants to address these issues.
- Chief Burson provided examples of the negative impact this is having on the community. It is draining resources and putting first responders at risk. He mentioned that officers were confronted by a man that came out with a machete and concerns about exposure to unsanitary conditions.
- Chief Burson said that the owner stopped in and introduced himself after purchasing the property and said that he wanted to fix things up. He gave impression that he wanted to do something to improve the conditions, but it is even worse now. It seems like the owner expects the SPD to deal with tenant issues while he collects rent.
- Terry Grice, Medina County Sheriff, thanks Chief Burson for the information, and asks if there are any Township regulations about junk vehicles. Ray Ruprecht responded that there are regulations for junk vehicles in the zoning regulations.
- Darren Stout, MCDTF, said they have responded to multiple drug overdoses at the property, and they have looked into holding the owner liable for enabling drug use/activity. The owner has been put on notice that this activity is occurring and that he could be held accountable for permitting the drug abuse on his property. They wanted to make certain that the owner knew that this was going on and could not deny knowing. If he is knowingly allowing drug use on his property, he could be held responsible.
- Captain Ross, MCSO, said that they partnered with Drug Task Force and were recently involved in a pursuit of car leaving the trailer park that ended at Route 18. Seville Police Department was also involved. Every time they have to respond they are putting themselves at risk of construction issues, weapons, and violence. They have also found juveniles from the property walking down Greenwich Road at night. They can arrest people, but they just go right back after they get out of jail. They frequent this place on a nearly weekly basis and want to know how to get this resolved. He wonders if the owner could be cited for nuisance activity.
- Mike Lyons, Medina County Prosecutor, responded that they need to be specific about what is being

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called out, what is the nuisance. Several sections of the ORC give the township the ability to cite for conditions. He asks if anyone has researched the ownership of the units; they should all have titles. If we look at it systematically, the Trustees can determine that a nuisance conditions exists and then they can go through the process of holding the owner accountable.

- Mr. Lyons has noted some questions of things that he will need to look into regarding the jurisdiction of mobile home parks. A coordinated and sustained effort will be required to resolve the issue. Zoning regulations may not be the best way to address nuisance control, but ORC 505.86 addresses the removal of insecure, unsafe buildings or structures and may help.
- Chief Burson said that years ago when the housing market crashed, the number of rentals in Seville increased and resulted in more problems with tenants. They were able to hold landlords more responsible with local ordinances for making sure tenants were not causing problems. They would document when drug offenses were committed on a property and advise the owner.
- Mike Lyons responded that Townships do not have the same power as municipalities, but similar steps could be taken in a Township. The Drug Task Force has already taken steps to notify the owner. They will need to rely on general criminal law to hold the owner responsible for drug activity and violations.
- There are also concerns about children living in these conditions. Mary O'Connell, MCJFS, said they are very familiar with this trailer park. They often do not allow workers to go to the location without someone else because it is dangerous. She can get some numbers of incidents. Residents have not been compliant with CPS when asked questions about children living there.
- Mr. Lyons suggests that they could look at the whole trailer park as a nuisance, and some of the units could certainly be considered hazardous. To start that process, the County Building official or the Fire Chief needs to make a determination that a structure is unsafe. Then Trustees can notify the owner that it is unsafe, and he has to repair or remove. They are required to hold a hearing with the Trustees, and then the Trustees make a determination and can have removed.
- Chief Winter said that they could cite each lot in violation and notify owner and occupant of the unit.
- Mr. Lyons will review the law to determine if there are any exceptions for trailers. They have done this with houses, but not trailers. If the property owner owns units that are not occupied, it seems like it could be fairly straight forward process. Junk strewn around is also a nuisance, and they have also worked with Townships to resolve those issues. The Township Trustees will need to decide if they are willing to follow through.
- Units are transferred by title transfer, so there should be official records. If there are no titles, there may be a different legal issue about ownership. If there is no evidence of ownership, they have to assume that the person who owns the property owns the units.
- Mr. Johnson asked if the Dept of Commerce said anything about annual inspections. Mr. Lyons

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responded that they should put pressure on Dept of Commerce. He suggests sending a formal letter with pictures of the units' conditions and ask how they are passing annual inspections. If any safety concerns are identified during annual inspections, they must be addressed immediately and they must provide proof.

- There is some discussion about if a trailer unit is ever part of the real property. Mr. Lyons said a trailer becomes permanent dwelling when attached to the ground. Statues suggest that if one is permanently attached with foundation, it becomes part of the real property.
- Mr. Stout asks if township zoning applies if a unit is attached to ground. Mr. Lyons responded that these are structures whether attached to the ground or not.
- Mayer Carter suggested checking with public utilities (BOPA) to find out who is getting billed for each unit. At one time an electric cord was running from one trailer to another.
- Sheriff Grice said that the possibility that children may be living in these conditions is a big concern and asked if anyone has been cited by CPS. Ms. O'Connell responded that children have been removed from that location and returned to other locations.
- Ray Ruprecht said that it sounds like everyone agrees that something needs to be done and asks where we need to go from here.
- Sheriff Grice said that we will likely need to have another meeting. Mr. Ruprecht confirms that the Trustees should schedule another meeting to continue discussions, and that this time of day works for everyone.
- Chief Winter asked if the Township could adopt ORC building code as a minimum standard. Mr. Lyons responded that the Township does not have that authority.
- Chief Winter asked if they need to do any more legwork or if they have enough information to get started. Mr. Lyons responded that they have enough to submit a complaint to the Dept of Commerce. He suggests creating an inventory of all units in the trailer park with identification, description of the condition, if they are occupied, ownership and inspections.
- There is some discussion about Fire Department access to the units. Mr. Carter said that Ohio Fire Code grants the Fire Department access to vacant structures. Mr. Lyons said that if they are denied entry to occupied units, they may need to get a search warrant and will need a reason to search.

Action Items

- There is some discussion on what needs to be done in the meantime, and the following action items were identified:
 - **Mike Lyons and Chief Winter** – Work together to prepare the letter to the Dept of Commerce.

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- **Medina County Sheriff's Office** - Attempt to track down ownership of the units.
 - **Chief Winter/SGFD** – Work on determining which structures are unsafe. Mr. Lyons suggests that it may be easiest to start with the units that are not occupied.
 - **Chief Winter/SGFD** – Work on an inventory of all units in the trailer park with identification, description of the condition, if they are occupied, ownership and inspections. May be able to get some of this information from the auditor's office.
 - **Ray Ruprecht** – Provide update to Guilford Township Trustees
 - **Guilford Township Trustees** – Schedule another meeting to continue discussions.
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- Ray Ruprecht thanks SPD and MCSO for their response and for helping Seville-Guilford Fire and EMS and the Township deal with these issues, and for bringing their concerns to the Township. He is confident that the Trustees will support this effort.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:17 A.M.