



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT



DEPARTMENT: Community Development Department

MEETING DATE: February 21, 2012

PREPARED BY: Sheila Spicer-Batice,
Neighborhood & Business Services Supervisor

AGENDA LOCATION: AR-2

TITLE: Code Enforcement Program Update

OBJECTIVE: To provide the City Council with an update on the Code Enforcement Program including responsibilities, procedures and statistics

BACKGROUND: At the December 20, 2011 City Council meeting, staff presented a report on a six-month pilot Rental Housing Inspection Program. The Pilot Program was intended to address multi-family residential housing issues in MAP Area 3. Upon completion of the report, discussion ensued about the current operations of the Code Enforcement Program, including the Administrative Fine process. Staff was directed to prepare an evaluation of the program and report back to the City Council. This report reviews the current operation of the Code Enforcement Section, which utilizes the Administrative Fine Program as a compliance tool for code issues.

ANALYSIS: The Monrovia Municipal Code and various other technical codes set standards for property owners to maintain their properties in a manner that doesn't detract from the character of our neighborhoods and business districts; also that doesn't compromise the health and safety of our residents and business owners. The responsibility for code compliance falls to the Code Enforcement Section of the Neighborhood and Business Services Division, which is part of the Community Development Department. The task of Code Enforcement is accomplished through the combination of education, community programs/resources, and the enforcement of applicable codes relating to blight, public nuisances, substandard housing, property maintenance, business operations and zoning/land use. The result is the preservation of the quality of life, community environment and property values for the citizens of Monrovia.

Staffing Levels

When fully staffed, the Code Enforcement section consists of one full-time Senior Code Enforcement Officer, two full-time Code Enforcement Officers, one full-time Business License Officer and one part-time/hourly Code Enforcement Officer. This allows the Section to conduct Code Enforcement on a proactive basis whereby Code Enforcement Officers actively patrol the City for code violations.

Presently, two full-time Code Enforcement Officers perform code enforcement duties throughout the City. The reduction in the number of staff is the result of the declining economy and budget cuts that the City has experienced over the past several years. Due to reduced staff, Code Enforcement is handled on a reactive basis (complaint driven) with the exception of daily sweeps for discarded items in the public right-of-way.

In addition to the two full-time Code Enforcement Officers, there are two part-time/hourly Code Enforcement Officers who are dedicated to monitoring abandoned and/or foreclosed properties. This was also necessary because of the downturn in the economy and the subsequent foreclosure crisis.

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those with extenuating circumstances where the violations do not pose an imminent health and safety concern. The following are code enforcement activity statistics prior to and after the implementation of the Administrative Fine Program in March 2008.

2004-2007 (PRIOR TO ADMINISTRATIVE FINE PROGRAM)

First Letters sent	3,716	
Second/Third Letter sent	2,547	(69% of cases went to next 2 letters)
Final Letter sent	462	(13% of cases went to final letter)
Legal referrals	209	(6% of cases went to legal referral)

2008-2011 (SINCE ADMINISTRATIVE FINE PROGRAM)

Education Notice	1,945	
Warning Notice	1,086	(56% of cases went to Warning)
Administrative Citation	220	(11% of cases went to Citation)
Legal referrals	4	(.02% of cases went to legal referral)

During this time period (2008-2011) 5,212 complaints were received and 37% of those were resolved by utilizing previously mentioned compliance methods.

Since its implementation, the Administrative Fine Program has proven successful in assisting in gaining compliance and decreasing repeat offenses. The City has reduced its legal fees dramatically and the number of Citations issued is down substantially as shown in the following chart:

ADMINISTRATIVE CITATIONS

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Citations Issued</u>
2008 (8 months)	52
2009	76
2010	53
2011	39

Code Enforcement Officer Training

Code enforcement is a function local governments perform that citizens consider important for accomplishing community goals, such as protecting property values and the environment. Others view code enforcement as an annoying intrusion into the free use of private property. Traditionally, it has been a process whereby local governments use various techniques to gain compliance with duly-adopted regulations such as land use and zoning ordinances, health and housing codes, sign standards, and uniform building and fire codes. In recent years, federal and state regulations governing air and water quality and the transport and storage of hazardous wastes, as well as requirements for implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act have come into play. Local governments are now