

Expanded Nuisance Property Program

Nuisance properties in the City of Peoria strain the resources of multiple City Departments and contribute to the instability of our neighborhoods. During a meeting with Councilman Grayeb, Councilwoman Jensen, and Mayor Jim Ardis, it became apparent that the majority of the nuisance properties are owned by a small group of landlords. The Police Department and the Community Development Department have tools to address properties individually but through collaboration with the Legal Department, are proposing changes to multiple ordinances that allow a greater focus on chronic nuisance landlords, as defined as such:

Chronic Nuisance Landlord - Any registered owner(s) or business of any owner of occupied rental property shall be held responsible for the actions of all residents, guests, or tenants of the property and the guests of the tenants of the property. If the property owner has two or more properties that have be deemed a chronic nuisance or aggravated chronic nuisance or drug nuisance property under the Code of the City of Peoria, Sections 20-200 through 20-207, the property owner shall therefore be deemed a chronic nuisance property owner.

A strategy was created based on the philosophy adopted in the "Don't Shoot" program. The strategy uses a focused deterrence strategy (also referred to as "pulling levers" policing) which is a problem-oriented policing strategy that follows the core principles of deterrence theory. This strategy targets specific criminal behavior committed by a small number of chronic offenders who are vulnerable to sanctions and punishment. Offenders are directly confronted and informed that continued criminal behavior will not be tolerated. Targeted offenders are also told how the criminal justice system (such as the police and prosecutors) will respond to continued criminal behavior; mainly that all potential sanctions, or levers, will be applied. The deterrence-based message is reinforced through crackdowns on offenders, or groups of offenders (such as gang members), who continue to commit crimes despite the warning. It is our goal to identify those property owners that are responsible for the demise of some neighborhoods in the city based upon their lack of commitment to maintain a decent property. Once these individuals have been identified, they will receive the full attention of the police department's Neighborhood Services Unit and other city departments responsible for achieving a high standard of living in the neighborhoods. The identified property owners will be required to comply with all terms put before them to bring up the quality of life in our neighborhoods or they will be subjected to civil and financial penalties.

An action plan was created to address this problem which includes changes to internal processes, amending existing ordinance language and a reorganization of the Nuisance Division within the Police Department.

Nuisance Ordinance

Chronic Nuisance Landlords will be defined and addressed as such.

After being identified as a Chronic Nuisance Landlord, the following items will apply:

- The owner shall have the property inspected by a Code Enforcement Inspector.
- The property must be brought into City of Peoria building code compliance immediately.
- The owner shall conduct criminal background checks on any future tenants to all of their properties at property owner's expense.
- The property owner shall attend Responsible Landlord training provided by the Peoria Police Department Neighborhood Services Unit.
- The property owner understands the City of Peoria reserves the right to suspend or revoke their registration/registrations as required through Chapter 5 of the City of Peoria Code should the property owner fail to comply with all the requirements set forth.
- A landlord may not rent property to a tenant they have previously evicted based upon chronic nuisance violations from one of their other properties.
- A landlord may not rent to a tenant that has recently been evicted by another landlord based on chronic nuisance violations.
- The landlord must initiate the legal eviction process or take other remedial measures approved by the City after the property and/or tenant has been deemed a chronic nuisance, promptly after the initial meeting with City staff.
- If one of the properties is deemed a chronic nuisance or a landlord is deemed a chronic nuisance landlord, all properties associated/owned by that owner may be subject to a required third party exterior and interior inspection. The inspection will be performed by a City approved third party inspection services at the owners expense. The City will provide the third party inspection service with an itemized list of items to inspect. Properties that fail to meet that inspection will be subject to a full interior and exterior inspection performed by a City of Peoria Code Enforcement Inspector. All properties in violation will be required to come into compliance with City Code through the Administrative Hearing Officer process

Non-Owner Occupied Property Registration Ordinance

The current non-owner occupied property registration will be changed to incorporate the following:

- A registration would be required to rent/occupy a property subject to the requirements of the Code.
- The City reserves the right to suspend/revoke the registration for the following reasons:
 - Property is declared a nuisance property
 - Property owner is declared a nuisance owner
 - Property owner has two adjudicated housing code violation fines in a 12- month period

- It defines that requirements would need to occur for a property to have the registration reinstated.
 - Property owner must comply with all requirements set forth by Police Department related to the nuisance ordinance
 - All Code violations must be corrected.
 - Property owner must pay all fines/fees owed to the City of Peoria
 - Property owner must pay reinstatement fee of \$100 per property

Failure to come into compliance with these sections or rent the property without a valid registration would subject the property owner to a minimum fine of \$500 per day.

Reorganization of Neighborhood Services Unit – Police Department

An increased staffing focused will be put on Nuisance Properties and Chronic Nuisance Property Owners. On June 9th, a Code Enforcement Inspector position was removed from the Community Development Department and added to the Police Department. In addition, an additional Police Officer will be assigned to the Neighborhood Services Unit.

The Neighborhood Service Unit consists of the following personnel:

- Lieutenant
- Sergeant
- Nuisance Abatement Officer (NAO)
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- Resident Officer (RO) – 1nd Council District
- Resident Officer (RO) – 2nd Council District
- Resident Officer (RO) – 3rd Council District
- Neighborhood Specialist
- Code Enforcement Inspector

The Neighborhood Services Unit will work to address a myriad of issues that tend to increase community blight and cause chronic nuisances within the City of Peoria. Efforts will be extended to address criminal activity stemming from real property, either commercial or residential that affects the immediate security, public safety and welfare of the citizens of the City of Peoria. When faced with general nuisance challenges, the NSU staff will take a directed deterrence approach to address significant criminal activity contributing to urban decay to include but not limited to, significant housing code violations, general quality of life offenses, issues directly related to tenants and non-compliance of Landlords. Although it is anticipated that this program will be focused in the Neighborhood Wellness Plan areas 1 & 2, it will be available City wide.