



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

BIANCA L. TIRADO, CITY CLERK

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

MAY 12, 2026, 4:30 P.M.

Committee Members Present:

Karen L. White, Sheila Niezgodski,
Ophelia Gooden-Rodgers, Sharon
McBride*, Angela Smith, Jessie Whittaker

Committee Members Absent:

Sherry Bolden-Simpson

Other Council Present:

Canneth Lee*

Others Present:

Bianca L. Tirado, Lari'onna Green, Veronica
Pitt-Payne, Bob Palmer

Presenters:

Darryl Scott, Jenna Throw

Agenda:

Working Session on Quality-of-Life
Ordinances

Members marked with an asterisk (*) are in virtual attendance.

Please note the attached link for the meeting recording:

<https://docs.southbendin.gov/WebLink/browse.aspx?dbid=0&mediaid=409265>

Committee Chair Karen L. White called to order the Residential Neighborhoods Committee meeting at 4:30 P.M. She introduced the topic of quality-of-life ordinances and introduced the presenters.

Working Session on Quality-of-Life Ordinances

Darryl Scott, Mayor's Chief of Staff, with offices on the sixth (6th) floor of City Hall, South Bend, IN 46601, began the presentation. He stated that the goal of this meeting is to provide an update on actions the City has taken and discuss future actions. He said nuisance properties, abandoned vehicles, debris, and dumping are concerns, and residents want consistent enforcement and clear consequences. He encouraged residents to stay engaged through neighborhood associations, neighborhood cleanups, and by reporting violations.

Jenna Throw, City Attorney, with offices on the sixth (6th) floor of City Hall, South Bend, IN

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Jasmine Jackson
CHIEF DEPUTY CITY CLERK / CHIEF OF STAFF

Matthew Neal
DEPUTY CITY CLERK / DIRECTOR OF POLICY

Veronica Pitt-Payne
DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS

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46601, continued the presentation. She said that quality-of-life ordinances pertain to several interrelated topics, and updates are underway on certain regulations in chapters nine (9), thirteen (13), fourteen (14), sixteen (16), and twenty (20) of the Municipal Code. She noted that in 2025, the Common Council approved an update to the ordinances in chapter thirteen (13) governing nuisance noises.

Attorney Throw explained the proposed changes to the Chronic Problem Property ordinance in chapter thirteen (13). Language was clarified to improve readability for residents, and some definitions and penalty limits were changed to align with state and federal law. The complaint period to obtain Chronic Problem Property status was extended, and a wider variety of citations were included. An enforcement tier for smaller multi-unit complexes was created to address their unique enforcement needs.

Attorney Throw explained the new short-term rental ordinance, which would require special exceptions for non-owner-occupied short-term rentals. The ordinance would also establish a permit process, requiring them to comply with all existing building, fire, health, and safety codes. Permits could be revoked for these properties if they receive three (3) citations, and eligibility for a special exception would be contingent upon a valid permit. She noted that actions the City can take regarding short-term rentals are heavily restricted by state law.

Attorney Throw explained the proposed amendments to the public nuisance ordinance in chapter sixteen (16). “Real or personal property” has been clearly defined, allowing the ordinance’s provisions to apply when nuisance conditions are present in vehicles. The amendments address “wrecked” vehicles, allowing for enforcement action toward vehicles that pose a public nuisance but do not meet the definition of “abandoned”. The ordinance was also expanded to include vehicles that are parked in a way that poses a nuisance, even if they are not wrecked or abandoned.

Attorney Throw explained the updated parking regulations in chapter twenty (20). These regulations address parking on sidewalks, tree lawns, and blocking lot approaches. Other sections in chapter twenty (20) were updated to address large vehicles and abandoned vehicles.

Attorney Throw explained changes to chapter nine (9) that address illegal burning, incorporating language from the Indiana Fire Code. She said they are also working on revisions to chapter fourteen (14) to align with the updated parking regulations from chapter twenty (20). Following the presentation, she opened for questions from the Committee.

Committee Chair White asked if the Committee could receive a copy of the presentation.

Attorney Throw confirmed she would send the PowerPoint to Committee Members.

Committee Chair White asked about parking regulations.

Attorney Throw said the updated parking regulations apply to parking on tree lawns, grassy right-of-way areas where no sidewalk is present, and blocking an approach.

Committee Member Ophelia Gooden-Rodgers asked about enforcing these regulations on weekends. She said residents avoid parking on lawns during the week, but they continue to park on lawns during the weekend when there is no enforcement. She asked about potentially working



with the South Bend Police Department (SBPD) to issue tickets. She said there are parking issues with large trailers, boats, and lawn equipment in her district, causing deterioration of the curbs and sidewalks.

Attorney Throw said the language in the ordinance applies equally to weekday and weekend parking. She said she can look into the enforcement approach on weekends.

Committee Member Gooden-Rodgers asked about potentially using cameras for enforcement. She said this could also apply to heavy dumping areas in her district.

Darryl Scott agreed with the concerns about parking enforcement on weekends. He said SBPD's FLOCK camera program could potentially partner with the City on illegal dumping enforcement.

Committee Vice Chair Sheila Niezgodski spoke about a resident's concerns regarding a neighbor with multiple vehicles. She said this neighbor has eight (8) vehicles, and many of them are inoperable. Other residents in the neighborhood are unable to access street parking in front of their homes. The inoperable vehicles have valid plates and registration. She asked what the City can do to ensure fair access to parking in the neighborhood.

Attorney Throw said that depending on the condition of the inoperable vehicles, the City may be able to take enforcement action. She said the current legislation has a gap in the definition of "abandoned" and "nuisance" vehicles. She said changing the language of the ordinance to include "wrecked" vehicles will help fill the gap, allowing enforcement action for vehicles that currently do not meet either definition.

Committee Vice Chair Niezgodski said residents in the neighborhood have been unable to trim their trees because these vehicles block access to their tree lawns, and they are concerned about being fined for something out of their control. She also said she has been trying to address certain nuisance properties for two (2) years, and the property owners do a partial cleanup after receiving fines or enforcement action with no intention of staying compliant long-term. She said residents are frustrated about these nuisance properties that are "stuck in the loop". She asked how the City can better communicate with residents about the process, progress, and expected timeline for action.

Attorney Throw said the Legal Department is looking for ways to move enforcement actions along more quickly while respecting due process requirements. She said for violations with an emergency call component, they are extending the complaint window by thirty (30) days. Once the property has received a warning notice, it will be subject to continuous enforcement for one-hundred-eighty (180) days. The current ordinance has a continuous enforcement period of ninety (90) days following a warning notice. She said these changes will make it harder for properties to stay "stuck in the loop".

Committee Vice Chair Niezgodski asked about next steps when fines are not paid.

Attorney Throw said unpaid fines are sent to collections, and property owners can potentially receive judgments against them. She said this creates a judgment lien, giving the City some recourse to collect.



Citizen Member Jessie Whittaker asked about fine escalation for repeat offenses.

Attorney Throw confirmed that fines escalate for repeat offenses, with a maximum of two-thousand-five-hundred dollars (\$2,500).

Citizen Member Whittaker asked what circumstances are needed to establish permit-only parking spaces for residents in front of their homes.

Attorney Throw said special permits can potentially be issued if there is an accessibility need.

Citizen Member Angela Smith asked the City's definition of "short-term rental".

Attorney Throw said the City defines "short-term rental" as a term of less than thirty (30) days.

Citizen Member Smith asked Attorney Throw to elaborate on the unique enforcement needs of small multi-unit residential properties.

Attorney Throw said large complexes receive a Chronic Problem Property designation after twelve (12) complaints across all units, and single-family homes receive a designation after five (5) complaints. She said twelve (12) complaints is too high for buildings with fewer total units, and five (5) is too high when considered on a per-unit basis. She said the Legal Department is proposing a seven (7)-complaint threshold for small multi-unit properties.

Committee Member Sharon McBride expressed support for strengthening the ordinances to go after bad actors, noting that she receives many calls from residents and there is only so much the City can do under the current ordinances. She said that Council should work to implement stronger sanctions, fines, and a faster response at the local level.

Committee Chair Karen White spoke about concerns regarding short-term rentals, including large parties, shootings, and property damage.

Council President Canneth Lee said nuisance properties and landlords have caused some residents to not enjoy living in their neighborhoods. He asked about the complaint process for Chronic Problem Properties.

Attorney Throw said the window for accumulating complaints is currently sixty (60) days, and they are proposing an increase to ninety (90) days. After three (3) substantiated complaints during this time, a warning is issued. She said they are also increasing the continuous enforcement period following a warning from ninety (90) days to one-hundred-eighty (180) days. Properties can then be designated as Chronic Problem Properties if they meet the complaint threshold for their property type during this period.

Council President Lee asked about the two-thousand-five-hundred-dollar (\$2,500) cap on fines. He asked if the City can fine per incident, or per unit for larger complexes.

Attorney Throw said the fine cap depends on the type of violation being cited. She said state law sets a cap of two-hundred-fifty dollars (\$250) for Chronic Problem Property-type violations, but additional citations can be issued when other violations are present.

Council President Lee asked what actions the City can take for properties that continue to have



violations and unpaid fines, other than sending the fines to collections.

Attorney Throw said the Legal Department will need to look at this in more detail, since enforcement falls outside of the ordinance revision process. She said it sounds like the current collections process is ineffective.

Committee Chair White opened the floor for public comment.

Alice Pickens, 234 North Albert Avenue, South Bend, IN 46619, asked what the City can do about squatters. She asked about pothole repair and listed specific streets in her neighborhood.

Committee Vice Chair Niezgodski said a new state law was passed allowing for the removal of squatters when there is no signed lease agreement with the property owner. She said this can only be enforced with a signed affidavit from the property owner, and if the owner is unwilling or unable to do this, the Chronic Problem Property process would be the only recourse.

Alice Pickens elaborated on a squatter situation in her neighborhood involving trash, illegal burning, animal welfare concerns, and people living out of vehicles on the property.

Committee Member Gooden-Rodgers noted that some of the streets with potholes that Alice Pickens mentioned are on the paving list for this summer.

Darryl Scott said road repaving will begin tomorrow. He asked Alice Pickens to provide the address of the squatter in her neighborhood.

Attorney Throw added that they are expanding the public nuisance ordinance to include vehicles, and if someone is living in a vehicle that is maintained in a way that is detrimental to health and safety, that would be considered a public nuisance.

Barbara Brownell, 1407 Sunnymede Avenue, South Bend, IN 46615, spoke about a recent incident of rapid gunfire from a short-term rental in her neighborhood. She acknowledged that state law limits what the City can do to restrict short-term rentals. She suggested implementing business licensing, registration fees, occupancy limits, and fire code inspections to improve the vetting process and safety of these units.

Committee Member McBride said she is aware of this recent incident in the Third (3rd) District, and she told Barbara Brownell she came to the right place to share her concerns.

Sue Kesim, 4022 Kennedy Drive, South Bend, IN 46614, said she shared a list of her questions and concerns in the meeting chat.

City Clerk Bianca Tirado told Sue Kesim her comments from the chat will be shared with the Committee.

Committee Chair White spoke about the importance of ensuring safe, clean neighborhoods for residents. She said this meeting is only the beginning, and the Committee will continue to work on quality-of-life ordinances. She said they will continue to listen to residents' concerns, review state laws, and look at other cities' approach to similar problems.

Attorney Throw added that the Legal Department is working on a short-term rental ordinance that



will allow for fire code enforcement, including occupancy limits and egress requirements. She said there will also be a registration fee, which the state caps at one-hundred-fifty dollars (\$150). She said she looks forward to continuing to work with the Committee to enhance the enforcement process and address these concerns.

Committee Chair White encouraged Committee Members and residents to write down any other concerns for discussion at a future meeting.

Darryl Scott said he is looking forward to future meetings and increasing enforcement efforts as much as possible with the tools available and within the limits of state law.

Committee Member Gooden-Rodgers said the City needs to be as strict with code enforcement as the state allows. She added that unlicensed automotive businesses are being operated out of residential homes in her district. She noted that other areas of the City are cleaner and well-maintained, and she emphasized the need to make the City equally livable for all residents.

Committee Vice Chair Niezgodski said her biggest concern has been enforcement. She acknowledged that some residents receive code violations due to extenuating circumstances or a lack of resources, and she said the intention is not to “bring the hammer down” on these residents. She said she is passionate about these issues, and she is looking forward to collaborating further.

Council President Lee spoke about the weekend code enforcement strategy in Gary, Indiana. He said this is something the City should consider implementing. He spoke about the difficulty of hearing residents’ concerns and being unable to do anything except issue fines.

Citizen Member Whittaker said she is excited knowing the City is taking action to address these issues.

Citizen Member Smith acknowledged the effort involved in going through ordinances to update language and cross references. She expressed appreciation for the Legal Department’s work to ensure the ordinances are up-to-date and written in clear language that everyone can understand.

Committee Member McBride thanked the Committee.

Committee Chair White thanked the Committee for their collaboration and thanked residents for their comments. She said she is excited to move forward and identify strategies to create safer, cleaner neighborhoods.

With no further business, Committee Chair White adjourned the Residential Neighborhoods Committee meeting at 5:41 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen L. White, Committee Chair



Questions & comments from Sue Kesim – Submitted to the chat, 05-12-2026
Residential Neighborhoods Committee working session

- What about fireworks debris that is left out in the streets and end up in other people's lawns? Animals eat the debris and are poisoned like by the phosphorous, etc. Kids could touch the debris as well.
- Noise - How about noiseless fireworks like they have in Europe? Better for Veterans with PTSD, people sleeping to go to work, scares dogs and then SBARC is overflowing, limit 4 Winds since they overuse them and they are near the hospital. Birds are also scared away from their nests reducing our bird populations.
- Let's tighten up the firework days to be more limited.
- Water - Dumping pool water onto a neighbor's property needs to have a substantial fine.
- Squatters - What are the parameters for dealing with this? They often leave a lot of trash.
- Anyway to let authorities know if a senior has gone into a facility or has passed away.
- What is the stance on letting neighbors help out and mow? Are they trespassing or is there an exemption?
- If there are common regular dumping areas, how about just put some industrial bins? Might be cheaper than cleanup or put bins in the Goodwill parking lot for example.
- I heard the amount of uncollected fines is in the hundreds of thousands. What is the amount? How about leans?