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***“Keeping our Family and Neighborhoods Safe”***

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***“Ugly is not illegal”***

Mr Mike Mohler, Deputy Director of Permits & Department of Code Enforcement, was the guest speaker at the SCA general meeting. He discussed his department's duties and addressed the concerns of several community members. Some of the highlights are below.

1. **Everyone should be proud of his or her home and neighborhood.**
2. The Department of Permits and Code Enforcement exists to ***preserve our communities***. The department accomplishes this by enforcing current codes and regulations.
3. The number is 410-887-3351. The department is open 7 AM – 5 PM and is complaint driven. They do not drive through neighborhoods looking for issues.
4. They accept all complaints. Too many anonymous complaints turned out to be false; therefore, anonymous complaints must be emailed, faxed, mailed or filed through the local congressional representative. Anonymous phone calls are not accepted.
5. There is no formal complaint form.
6. The county cannot fix what it does not know about.
7. The county aims to have an inspector on site within 24 hours once a complaint is filed.
8. Inspectors have discretion when issuing citations. There is a difference between clutter, junk and debris. Also, ugly is not a violation. Peeling paint or a falling gutter are violations. An unsightly color is not.
9. Inspectors can go on any property but will not go inside unless invited.
10. Inspectors can issue fines, correction notices and/or citations but the ultimate goal is to get compliance, not money.
11. The county has the authority to correct issues by hiring contractors, but the cost of the contractors is usually higher than if chosen by a homeowner. The County will ultimately get the homeowner to pay for the repairs by putting a lien on the property.
12. Yes, rats do exist in Baltimore County. The best way to get rid of them is to prevent them. All trash containing food particles must be covered at all times.
13. Currently, recycling for Baltimore County is recommended but not required.
14. People abandoning homes are becoming a large issue in Baltimore County.
15. Massage parlors are a growing problem; too many are offering more than massages.
16. Basketball hoops in the street and loitering are illegal and a police issue. The department does not handle what is in the street.
17. Inoperable Cars are a violation of county code.

Please join us at the next SCA meeting to hear the next speaker. As always attending is free.