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Resident dislikes blight and slum



Jennifer Munden addresses the Levy County Commission on Tuesday (Nov. 7).

Story and Photo

By Jeff M. Hardison © Nov. 9, 2017 at 2:07 p.m.

BRONSON – A Levy County Williston area resident who sees property in her neighborhood that has reached a point where she feels the government should enforce ordinances regarding blight.

Another issue she brought up Tuesday (Nov. 7) is barking dogs in her neighborhood.

Julie Munden owns a home on Levy County Road 102 in the eastern part of the county.

She said there is property in the area that "... has trash in the yard and it has become worse over the years."

Munden said she has filed four complaints with the code enforcement department of Levy County. She said she first filed a complaint on Oct. 13, but has seen no response in that regard.

Also, she said, there are two dogs on that property in her neighborhood that bark 24-hours-a-day.

"I work in Gainesville," Munden said, "but I bring my money back to Levy County. I am proud to live here. I am a taxpayer, and I am a registered voter."

Munden said the Levy County Sheriff's Office told her that it does not enforce the animal nuisance ordinance. Complaints filed with Levy County Animal Services have brought no results as well, she added.

She asked the County Commission who enforces the ordinances that exist in Levy County. She has lived in Levy County for 10 years, she said.

This is the second time Munden approached the County Commission with a noise complaint in the past six years, according to records. The first was on Oct. 4, 2011

In 2011, Munden requested the County Commission to assist in resolving a noise issue from

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neighbors.

Six years ago, she stated renters had moved in adjacent from her on Sept. 7, 2011, and have been getting electricity for the pre-existing mobile home by a generator.

The generator is extremely loud and runs from 6 p.m. until about 10 p.m. Munden had contacted the LCSO back in 2011 to measure the noise and was informed they do not have a decibel meter, according to minutes from that County Commission meeting in 2011.

Years ago, former County Commissioner Danny Stevens requested former Building Official Rob Corbitt to have a deputy go to the residence with decibel meter to measure the sound level.

The trouble now, though, is two dogs barking, barking, barking.

There are piles of garbage and trash in the yard of this particular house, Munden told the County Commission on Tuesday. One dog is chained to a trailer and one dog is chained to a tree there, she said. And they bark incessantly, she said.

Other neighbors have filed complaints with the county about this trash-ridden residence as well, Munden said.

County Commission Chairman John Meeks told Munden that he would check with county code enforcement to see why she has not been contacted. County Commissioner Lilly Rooks said she would look into this issue as well.

County Commissioner Mike Joyner asked Munden to call him if she does not see results. County Commissioner Matt Brooks, where the issue is located, did not comment. County Commissioner Rock Meeks was absent Tuesday.

County Attorney Anne Bast Brown said that if the barking dogs are covered under the county ordinance, then the complaint would be enforced by the LCSO. If it is an animal issue, she added, then Levy County Animal Services is responsible to respond to a request for assistance.

Chairman Meeks said he understands the nuisance and aggravation from hearing barking dogs.

If the dogs are barking 24-hours-a-day, he said, they may need food or water. Or there could be something in the environment causing them to bark – such as other dogs or stray cats.

Levy County Building Official Bill Hammond said when there is a complaint made about debris and trash, the offender typically is given 30 days to comply with the demand from the county to clear it.

After 30 days, Hammond said, the county files for court action. That usually takes 60 days. Violators can save money, however, by responding properly before being taken to court.

Chairman Meeks promised Munden that at the least the county will provide her with an update on the status of resolving these issues.

Another resident of the neighborhood said his family visited him, and after seeing that piece of property they decided against considering buying property in that part of Levy County.