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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
**COUNTY OF FAIRFAX**

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**JEFFREY C. MCKAY**  
 LEE DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

**My common sense approach to neighborhood issues is making a positive impact on our community.**

It used to be that...	During the last ten months, I have worked to:
<p><b>Vacant and foreclosed homes</b> were not tracked by the county and neighbors were left to deal with the impacts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ensure</b> that the county tracks each foreclosure.</li> <li>• <b>Share</b> foreclosure information with the police and fire departments for patrol follow up.</li> <li>• <b>Restructure</b> the blight enforcement office to address vacant properties. Now headed by the Sheriff, this effort is structured like our enforcement Strike Teams. Neighbors can report vacant properties on the county web site for review.</li> <li>• <b>Develop</b> ways to hold property owners, especially banks, responsible for their homes. On my urging the county is investigating possible registration of vacant properties and fees to help defray costs the county incurs for services.</li> <li>• <b>Prevent</b> future foreclosures with new tools in housing department geared toward helping citizens.</li> </ul>

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<p>It took 90 days or more for the county to enforce violations of the <b>grass</b> ordinance (grass over 1 foot = violation).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cut</b> the enforcement period to 2 weeks.</li> <li>• <b>Bill irresponsible property owners</b> directly for the cost of the cutting instead of putting a lien on the property. To date approximately \$10,000 in cutting fees have been collected and the billings have not yet been completed.</li> <li>• <b>Increase communication</b> with neighbors. Neon green notices on the doors of vacant homes are a sign to neighbors that the county has enforcement actions underway.</li> </ul>
<p>County staff interpreted county ordinances just they way they always had for years and overlooked <b>important legal tools</b> that could help address property maintenance violations and speed up enforcement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Expose</b> lackluster enforcement of dilapidated commercial and residential buildings and focus county enforcement efforts on using the statewide building code to address property maintenance problems.</li> <li>• <b>Renew</b> enforcement efforts with updated and common sense interpretations of the ordinance for issues like carports overflowing with junk.</li> <li>• <b>Fight</b> for additional legislation from the state to increase enforcement efficiency: inspection warrants are now easier to obtain, time is saved by posting violation notices on the property, and appeal periods are being reduced.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Zoning violators</b> received the equivalent of a slap on the wrist.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Get new laws</b> on the books that have resulted in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ stiff penalties for boarding house operators. (This summer, one boarding house operator in Lee District was assessed more than \$24,000 in fines).</li> <li>○ criminal charges for serious offenders (if civil fines total \$5,000 or more, criminal charges are also pursued with each day the violation continues being a separate offense).</li> <li>○ enforcement actions recorded in the land records for a property so that the next owner of the home also must comply.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Code enforcement</b> was not coordinated among all the different county agencies responsible for the health and safety of our neighborhoods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lead the support</b> for coordinated enforcement via the Strike Teams' work and ensure that the teams have the tools necessary to crack down on illegal boarding houses. I did inspections with Strike Team members and witnessed first hand the challenge of this work.</li> <li>• <b>Fund an additional 1.25 million</b> to support this critical effort and create a third team.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Realtors were not held accountable</b> for the properties they listed that advertised violations (apartments in single family homes, second kitchens, and the like).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Develop</b> a partnership with the Northern Virginia Board of Realtors (NVAR) and sought their help in educating NVAR members.</li> <li>• <b>Report shady realtors</b> to the NVAR. The NVAR legal staff have responded by sanctioning members for unethical sales practices.</li> </ul>

It used to be that...	During the last ten months, I have worked to:
<p>County staff said there was nothing that could be done about “<b>big box McMansions</b>” looming over existing 1950’s ramblers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Develop</b> a variety of ways to address housing compatibility (angle bulk plane, floor area ratio, lot coverage).</li> <li>• <b>Address the adverse impacts</b> of McMansions via the Housing Compatibility Study. Preliminary recommendations are scheduled for public hearings this fall.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Building plans for large new homes</b> constructed on old foundations were reviewed in a matter of minutes and permits for this type of building could be obtained very quickly with only cursory county review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ensure</b> that each application for this type of “infill” development is thoroughly reviewed on multiple levels and that setbacks and building height are verified in the field. No more walk-through permits for new homes.</li> <li>• <b>Require</b> county staff to scrutinize plans for signs of potential boarding houses. Excessive plumbing, multiple kitchen rough-ins and the like are all challenged.</li> <li>• <b>Stop</b> field approvals for changes to plans that affect setback or building height.</li> <li>• <b>Require</b> setback verification before framing inspections.</li> <li>• <b>Expand</b> the criteria for grading plans and ensured land disturbance calculations are verified in the field.</li> <li>• <b>Close</b> loopholes in the permit process that some unethical builders used to cut corners and skirt regulations.</li> </ul>

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Removal of <b>graffiti</b> on private property was not enforced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pass</b> a new graffiti ordinance. As a result, all graffiti on both private and public property is now documented and removed.</li> <li>• <b>Develop</b> a process for neighbors to report graffiti to the police for follow up.</li> <li>• <b>Allow</b> county officials to enter private property to remove graffiti when owner is uncooperative.</li> </ul>

**If you are concerned about issues in your neighborhood, please contact my office. We are happy to help with any concern that you may have. My office phone number is 703-971-6262 and my email address is [leedist@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:leedist@fairfaxcounty.gov) .**

**Additional neighborhood resources are available on the county's website. Check out:**

- Vacant and Foreclosed Home Resources at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/foreclosures/>
- Code Enforcement Resources Including Complaint Histories and Strike Team Information at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/opa/striketeam/>