

National Vacant Properties Campaign
Reclaiming Vacant Properties:
Building Leadership to Restore Communities

**Code
Enforcement
Profile**

Edward P Cunningham

Division Manager
Property Maintenance Code Enforcement
City of Cincinnati, Ohio
513-352-1909
edward.cunningham@cincinnati-oh.gov

The 35 Year Journey....

- “74” Building Maintenance 2-Year Vocational
- “77” Apartment Building Maintenance
- “82” Non-Profit -Major Home Repair
- “87” Housing Inspector Trainee, City Cincinnati
- “95” University of Cincinnati- Humanities, Philosophy, Writing, Communication
- Present- Division Manager, Code Enforcement, Certified Building Official

Code Enforcement Philosophy...

- Keep your eye on the “main thing”
- Have a network of problem solving resources
- Build partnerships but remember your “police powers”
- Criminal & Civil litigation is expensive, Have knowledgeable, persuasive inspectors.
- Create a self fulfilling prophecy
- Is it really good enough for (Neighborhood Name)?
- Code enforcement –Not an end in itself, look for leverage opportunities to make a difference
- Community leaders can be your best assets and allies

Companion Quotes...

- “The only thing that will redeem mankind is cooperation.” *Bertrand Russell*
- “The best way to get a bad law repealed is to enforce it strictly.” *Abraham Lincoln*
- “It is the spirit and not the form of law that keeps justice alive.” *Earl Warren*
- “We are a government of laws not of men.” *John Adams*

Cincinnati Profile..

- Cincinnati is the third largest City in Ohio (Population 332,252)
- Approximately 131,000 housing units
- 83% of single family housing & 60% of multi-family units are over 60 years old
- Population in 1950 was 503,998
- Population loss of 171,746 or 37%
- Several waves of immigration in the 19th Century leading to crowded, older housing today

Code Enforcement Division...

- 25 Inspectors, 4 Inspection Supervisors
- Total Staff 36
- Approximately 4000 vacant buildings, 1900 with orders.
- 9774 Requests for service in 2008
- 6685 New Code Violation Cases 2008
- 625 Criminal and Civil Citations 2008

3- Most Important Ingredients in addressing vacant buildings

- Know the problems- Database/
Public interface/ Workflow
- Create a Vacant Building Task Force
- Have the right tools for the job

Know the problems...

- Know where the vacant buildings are- mapping
- Know the problems, foreclosures, premises history, condition inventory, ownership etc.
- Streamline your workflow through automation and technology
- Create a website so the public can track cases and find opportunities

Create a Vacant Building Task Force....

- The mission is to address vacant buildings
- Do not prioritize against occupied sub-standard housing
- Hone the special skills needed to address vacant buildings
- Greater ability to quantify the cost of code enforcement in addressing vacant buildings

Have the right tools for the job...

- Vacant Building Licensing
- Demolition and Barricade Program
- Public Nuisance/Receivership statutes
- Community Justice- Legal Support- Civil & Criminal Remedies
- NEP Neighborhood Enhancement Program- email ethel.cogen@cincinnati-oh.gov for a copy of the “How to Manual”
- A plan for “Right Sizing” if applicable

Challenges for the Future...

- Find more ways to leverage code enforcement results through heightened cooperation and partnerships
- Changing the way lenders/servicers do business under the securitized mortgage system
- Coming to grips with “rightsizing”
- Define Code Enforcement’s role in transformation of a City built for the people and industry of the turn of the last century, to an urban area that meets the needs of today and the future. Maximizing- Geography, History, Culture, Art Institutions, Hospitals, Education, etc. What do urban areas have that people want and need that can’t be had elsewhere?
- Find better ways to sustain quality public housing