

**Hyattsville Code Compliance Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes 4.15.26**

Members:

Name	Title	Status
Michael Bonds	Chair	Present
Arinee Flurry	Vice Chair	
Stacy Dennerly	Recorder	Present
Ian Fay	Member	
Juan Pablo (JP) Madrid	Member	Present
Susan Zahran	Member	
Gloria Felix-Thompson	Member	Present
CJ Reading	Code Compliance Staff Liaison	Present
Jeff Ulysse	Director of Community, Business, and Econ Dev	
Hal Metzler	Code Compliance Staff Liaison	
Dealon LaCroix	CAO Rep for Hyattsville Public Works	
Gopi Dhokai	Council Member Liaison Ward 3	Present

Zoom Link Is Typically: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82426515050>

Topics Discussed:

1. Roll Call taken.
2. Agenda is approved by the Committee.
3. Minutes for the prior meeting are approved.
4. Comments from the public:
 - o None
5. Updates from Liaison Ward 3, Gopi Dhokai
 - o Gopi will see if she can get the grass length violation warning time on a future council agenda. Last time the consensus was 10 days, so she does not see an issue getting this approved.
 - o Vexation reporting: Strab and co-sponsor Dhokai will try to get this in front of council ASAP.
 - o Gopi asked for a recap of the snow policy changes discussed in a previous meeting (see below)
6. Code Compliance Updates from City's Staff Liaison:
 - o Single family inspection time is ongoing. CJ is hoping to close those out soon.
 - o Grass length code will be enforced soon. No Mow April is often adopted, so staff is trying to be understanding of this (neighborly reminders are preferred).
 - o Trying to change operational procedures to maintain consistency across code violations:
 - Neighborly reminders are always used first for minor infractions, followed by warnings.
 - CJ prefers not to tape things to doors (CJ will ask staff to mail items)
 - If staff sees a violation, it should be observed from the public right of way (not seen when on private property)

- Changes in Code Office Organization: Prior manager was typically handling administrative duties. CJ (Acting Manager) is more of a “working manager” who is out in the field. They are doing some internal training to try to share the admin duties and seasonal duties.
7. Snow Removal Fines:
- o Mike drafted a memo summarizing the history, status quo, and potential recommendations (see text in the Appendix below). The committee recommends the following changes:
 - Change to “The Committee recommends”
 - Relook at logic from beginning to end of 2nd paragraph (somewhat hard to follow)
 - Look into how the fines can be adjusted over time (e.g., follow inflation). Gopi will look into how this can/cannot be done.
 - Create list of bullets for recommendations
 - \$100 or first offense; \$200 for second offense
 - Look up what exact sections of the code this would go in
 - o Mike will draft a new memo with the above changes
8. New Business:
- o Urban Fowl
 - We previously discussed creating a more succinct list of recommendations for language changes; the prior list was too long.
 - CJ: From an enforcement position, CJ agrees that we need more guidelines to allow urban fowl (coops size, lot size, # of fowl, etc). Simply striking fowl will alarm people.
 - Gopi: It would likely not pass through council without more specific guidelines. May not have much support. Ward 1 construction (Hyattsville Elem) has caused rats to move, which is the current animal challenge.
 - Urban Fowl remain a backburner topic (no appetite to tackle this now)
9. Next Meeting: May 20, 2026
10. Meeting is adjourned.

Appendix:

Draft Recommendation Letter on Snow Removal Fines:

Dear Mayor and Council:

The late January 2026 snowstorm resulted in several inches of snow and ice accumulating across Hyattsville. Due to heavy accumulation of ice on top of the snow, the standard 24-hour deadline for removing snow from sidewalks was extended to 48 hours.

After that, the Hyattsville Department of Code Enforcement issued roughly 30 citations to

businesses and multifamily properties for failure to remove snow from sidewalks as per

Section 105-2 of the Code of the City of Hyattsville, but only issued warnings to individual

homeowners. This is because, per Section 105-125 of the Code, that fines for failure to

remove snow “shall be 1/2 of the maximum fine allowed by the Local Government Article of

the Annotated Code of Maryland” for a first offense, and “equal to the maximum allowed” by

the same section of the Code of Maryland. That section of the state code (Local Government

Article, §6-102) specifies a maximum fine of \$5,000, and the city’s Code does not allow for

any other partial amount. Code Enforcement, given a choice between issuing onerous fines of

upwards of \$2,500 to individuals for not clearing sidewalks and issuing only warnings, chose

to do the latter.

If fines are to be an effective tool for encouraging individuals to clear sidewalks in front of their

homes, then the amounts should be set such that Code Enforcement will actually issue them.

Therefore, the City Council should consider amending Chapter 105 of the code to set fines for

failure to remove snow from sidewalks at \$100 for individuals, while retaining the current

amount for businesses and multifamily properties.

Furthermore, the city should also consider identifying other fines that could reasonably be

issued to individuals for which the penalty is tied to the same section of the Code of Maryland,

that should also be reduced.