

# Alton Code Enforcement Concerns Raised

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter  
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ALTON - Alton resident Charlie Stocker raised concerns about code enforcement and deteriorating properties at [Monday's Committee of the Whole meeting](#). After months of trying unsuccessfully to meet with the mayor and the Code Enforcement/Building and Zoning director, he said he's now taking the story to the news media.

Stocker said he moved to Alton in 2005 and that the city's Code Enforcement Department has "struggled at best," adding he and others find the department "very ineffective."

"The part that seems to be most ineffective is when there's a violation and somebody gets cited and for whatever reason, they ignore the city and their efforts to enforce it," Stocker said during public comments at Monday's meeting. "They either don't pay the fine, or they pay the fine and still don't come up to code."

"As a result, in the last three years as of August 30, the city has spent just north of \$900,000 to tear down 60 houses. There is currently 137 houses on demolition list - based on the average cost per house in the last three years, that will cost the city somewhere north of \$2 million to tear down those 137 houses. In my estimation, that's a huge problem."

"When these houses fall through the cracks and the city doesn't have an effective way to keep these houses from languishing and falling literally into disrepair to the point that they can't be saved, that's a problem."

Stocker also referenced Einstein's definition of insanity, which he essentially boiled down to repeating the same behavior and expecting a different result. He compared this to his experience trying unsuccessfully to get a meeting with Alton Mayor David Goins and Greg Caffey, the director of both Building and Zoning and Code Enforcement.

"I wish I could tell you what Mr. Caffey and the Mayor's thoughts on code enforcement is, but unfortunately, since July, I've been trying to get a meeting with Mr. Caffey and since September with the Mayor, and so far have not been successful - so quite frankly, I've given up thinking that that's going to happen. Going to that definition of insanity, I've passed beyond that."

"I'm not going to be going to the city anymore, since I couldn't meet with the mayor or Mr. Caffey, so instead, I'm doing something different. I am currently shopping this story to the news press, both print and news stations."

He also questioned whether or not Mayor Goins and Caffey actually find code enforcement a problem, or if they do, whether they're willing to make any "impactful changes." One such change he referenced was the proposed requirement for separate full-time directors of both Code Enforcement and Building and Zoning, which was [recently vetoed by Mayor Goins](#).

While issuing his veto, the mayor said he believes the solution to the city's code enforcement problem is not more department directors, but more code enforcement

officers, who go on-foot to “do the job of code enforcement” rather than sitting in an office. Alderwoman Carolyn MacAfee plans to lead a vote to challenge this veto.

A full recording of the Alton Committee of the Whole meeting is available at the top of this story, on the [Riverbender.com Facebook page](#) or on [Riverbender.com/video](#).