



Communications Office

The City of Morgantown

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Morgantown Meets to Discuss Action for Student Party Problem

St. Patrick's Day Weekend resulted in almost 40 calls for fires, more than 50 citations for enthusiastic college-age partiers.

MORGANTOWN – Morgantown City Manager Terrence R. Moore called a meeting Wednesday, March 28, 2012 to draw leaders together and discuss what can be done about the smoldering party problem.

Leadership from City Council, West Virginia University, its Police, along with City fire, police, and landlords met in Council Chambers to address the actions of nefarious student residents and visitors on the weekend of St. Patrick's Day. According to Fire Chief Mark Caravaso, 36 fires were intentionally set that evening and into the wee hours, while Police Chief Ed Preston was addressing more than 500 calls that came into dispatch, resulting in 56 written warning citations, 57 traffic violations, and numerous verbal warnings.

“This is an opportunity for the City of Morgantown and WVU to be on the same side and demonstrate a united front,” said Moore.

Chief Ed Preston spoke first and was able to address questions from council and landlords. He explained the process for citation, and stressed that violators needed to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law in order to stop the problem.

Landlords from Sunnyside and the Grant Avenue area called for stricter clean-up rules from City Police and Municipal Judges, and accepted that they have power to get the problem partiers out of Sunnyside by evicting repeat offenders. They recalled the day when Grant Avenue Block Parties plagued the neighborhood, and said they've come a long way – but the partying continues to escalate to violence and malicious acts of destruction.

West Virginia University Director of Housing and Interim Dean of Students Corey Farris also spoke, calling the actions “embarrassing,” and saying that the entire city has to stand together to address the issue.

“The issue isn't a low Standard of Admissions or G.P.A.,” Farris said. “It's alcohol.”

WVU Leadership suggested that it share the results of the cases that come before the Board of Governors for offenses - how many suspensions and how many expulsions come from investigations into DUIs, destruction of property charges, underage drinking and the like. Councilors suggested this would help to spread the word that a culture of blatant disregard for order and laws will not be tolerated.

The group concluded that if they are able to address these issues together and as a community, they are much more likely to see results.

If you have questions, please contact the Public Communications office Monday through Friday between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. The number there is (304) 284-7426.