

Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation

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June 4, 2016

Mr. William Novack
Director, Transportation, Engineering & Development (TED)
City of Naperville
400 S. Eagle Street
Naperville, IL. 60540

Subject: NAHC input on recycling & trash bin storage

Dear Bill,

In response to discussions you and I had following the City Council request for Homeowners Confederation input on proper storage of recycling and trash bins, the Confederation discussed this issue at several Board and general meetings and within our newsletter, and polled the community (via the Confederation website) to determine their sentiments.





Based on this input, we have several comments/recommendations for consideration.

1. While it appears that many people have opinions (some of which are quite strong) on either side of this topic, there is not a clear consensus for city ordinance development regulating appropriate storage of these containers on private property.
2. Anecdotal evidence seems to indicate that many common interest community associations (i.e. mandatory homeowners and townhome associations) already have restrictions in place which may or may not be effectively enforced by the individual community. It would be helpful to gain a better understanding of this and determine what lessons can be learned from their enforcement experience.
3. There are, however, steps which can be taken to hopefully address many of the concerns expressed. These include:
 - a. Implementation of a community awareness program on the "curb appeal" impacts of trash and recycling bins as permanent front yard fixtures.
 - b. Creation of a "trade-in" program whereby residents can swap out large (e.g. 96 gallon) carts for smaller carts which may be easier to store in garages and elsewhere out of plain view.
 - c. Encouraging townhome communities (where exacerbating issues such as small garages and lack of side/back yard access typically limit storage options) to self-regulate as appropriate within their community utilizing their Townhome Association rules and regulations. (These can typically be implemented at their Board or annual meeting level and do not require changes to deeds and covenants).
4. Further data collection (18 months?) on the issue including tracking of resident complaints and determining if awareness of the issue (i.e. publicizing neighbor discontent) will lead to increased self-regulation across the community. Basically, let's see if an information campaign (utility bill inserts, city website, etc.) will create an understanding within the community that many find this to be a problem. Once greater awareness is established, determine whether this increased awareness helped ameliorate the negative situation before turning to a "hammer" (if that is what City Council would see as being appropriate).

Specific information the Confederation collected included an unscientific web poll which ran on our website for roughly 3 weeks in April. We publicized the existence of this poll on our Facebook Page as well as on at least two community bulletin board pages. Interest and comments received from these postings were greater than for any issue we have ever addressed in this manner, with nearly 8,000 views on our Facebook posts and over 1,400 votes cast on the website poll. Below are specific details on the web poll:

Public Poll:

Should the City of Naperville enact regulations prohibiting the ongoing storage of trash and recycling bins in front and side yards in plain view of neighbors and passers-by?

Options	Votes		
Yes. They are ugly and detract from neighborhood curb appeal	749.00		52.45%
No. Some residents have no other place to store them	548.00		38.38%
Don't like them in plain view, but this should be a neighborhood issue, not a city mandate	160.00		11.20%
I don't know	5.00		0.35%
Total Responders	1428.00		

(Votes may not add up to the total responders because people can vote for more than one option in this poll.)

A continuing theme in many Facebook responses was the question of why asking this question was necessary and why Naperville considered this a problem that needed to be addressed. One resident took the time to point out (in an email to the Confederation) that in some ways, Naperville was a laggard in addressing this issue, pointing to ordinances in Buffalo, New York (garbage receptacles shall be kept in rear yards and may not be stored in the front of properties, unless authorization is received from the Commissioner of Public Works and Streets); San Diego, California (containers should be stored in a secured location that is not visible from public right-of-way. This could include such locations as behind a fence, in your backyard or in your garage); and Lebanon, Tennessee (containers shall be located for storage on the premises at a location which is closer to the back door of the residence using the container than to any doorway or window of any other residence).

Some realtors (and individuals selling their homes) concurred with the need to limit the prevalence of openly viewed garbage and recycling cans and carts as they saw this as an element of curb appeal that could and should be controlled to keep properties as attractive as possible when viewed by potential buyers. Other neighbors, not selling their houses but who gaze on these unconventional lawn ornaments on a daily basis, agreed that bins in plain view were a problem.

Some residents pointed out that, particularly after the larger recycling bins were mandated, there was simply no room in their garage. Townhome residents reminded us that many units have neither a side yard nor ready access to the street from their backyard. Finally there were those residents who believed that it was their property and they could keep their receptacles anywhere they desired and that their bin storage and placement was neither the business nor concern of neighbors or the City.

All in all, our takeaway was that many people are concerned, but there is not a clear majority consensus on whether action should be taken, or the type of actions that should be considered. As a finite subset of opinion, the Confederation Board of Directors was in agreement that this could indeed cause issues within neighborhoods, but we felt that there was simply not a compelling reason at this time to take the drastic steps of creating community wide regulation and subsequent enforcement.

The Confederation greatly appreciates the trust and faith expressed in our opinions and community representation shown through requesting that we take the lead on collecting community comment. Please feel free to share these findings with City Council as you deem appropriate and let me know if you have any questions on this submission. I would be happy to discuss this at greater length if it was felt that this would be helpful.

Sincerely,

Bob

Robert Fischer
President – Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation