

## **Orange launches campaign to require maintenance, security and registration of abandoned properties**

**M**ayor Eldridge Hawkins, Jr. announced that Orange has begun enforcement of its new ordinance requiring the owners of vacant abandoned properties to register their properties and maintain them.

Ordinance No. 14-2009 passed unanimously by the City Council on July 9th, requires the registration of abandoned properties.

As defined by the ordinance, maintenance means: free of all weeds, dry bushes, dead vegetation, junk, debris, building material and garbage. There can't be any accumulation of flyers, notices, discarded personal items of any sort that give the appearance that the property is vacant or abandoned. The property owner must remove any graffiti. Visible front side yards and back yards must be kept properly landscaped according to code.

In addition, securing the property means: the closure and locking of windows, doors (including garage), gutters and any other openings. In the case of windows, they must contain glass or be boarded up. The law also requires that the property manager's name, address and 24-hour contact phone number be posted on the property.

On Wednesday, July 29th, Valerie

Jackson, Director of Planning and Development sent certified letters out to all owners of vacant properties requiring them to register their properties with the City within 10 days of the notice. Information about the new abandoned properties law and a registration form for owners of vacant properties is posted on the Orange website.

Statement by Mayor Eldridge Hawkins, Jr. With the recession and increasing foreclosures, too many owners of vacant properties are failing to maintain them. At our recent Quality of Life Public Forum, this was a common complaint. With the cooperation of the City Council, Orange has now put the owners of vacant properties on notice that they must keep their properties in decent condition or face penalties."

Statement by Valerie Jackson, Director of Planning and Development

This ordinance is part of our strategy to keep Orange healthy and well maintained in the face of hard times. Together with our programs to assist struggling owners avoid foreclosure and our efforts to purchase, rehabilitate and resell already foreclosed properties, we are working to prevent neighborhood blight and deterioration."

---