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Zoning Code Enforcement

Bret Howser

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John Janson

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Bret Howser, Brian Head Town Manager



Code Enforcement Across Community Types: A Garfield County Perspective

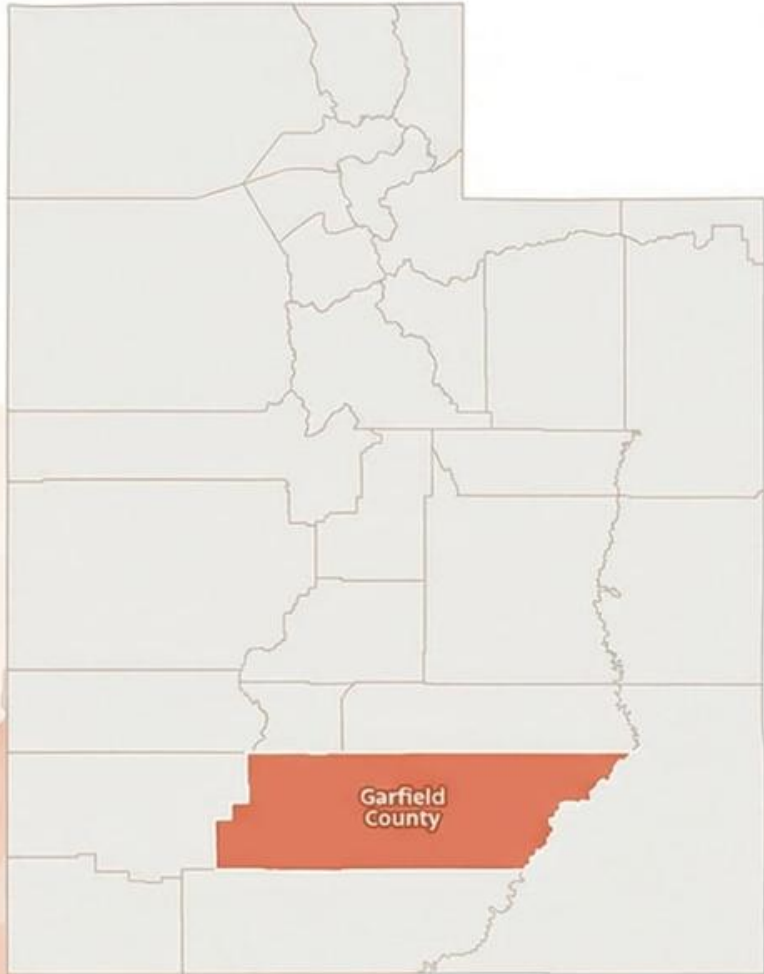
Lessons from a Rural County Perspective

Kaden Figgins, Garfield County Planner

APA Spring Planners Conference | Bryce Canyon, Utah | April 2026



Garfield County at a Glance



~5,000 Residents

across 5,175 sq. miles

Large County

One of the largest counties in Utah by area

Major Landmarks

Home to Bryce Canyon, Grand Staircase-Escalante, Capitol Reef

Gateway Economy

Tourism-driven, short-term rentals are a major land-use factor

Code Enforcement Isn't a Department — It's Everyone's Side Job



1. Neighbor complaint
(formal written submission
to Planning Dept.)



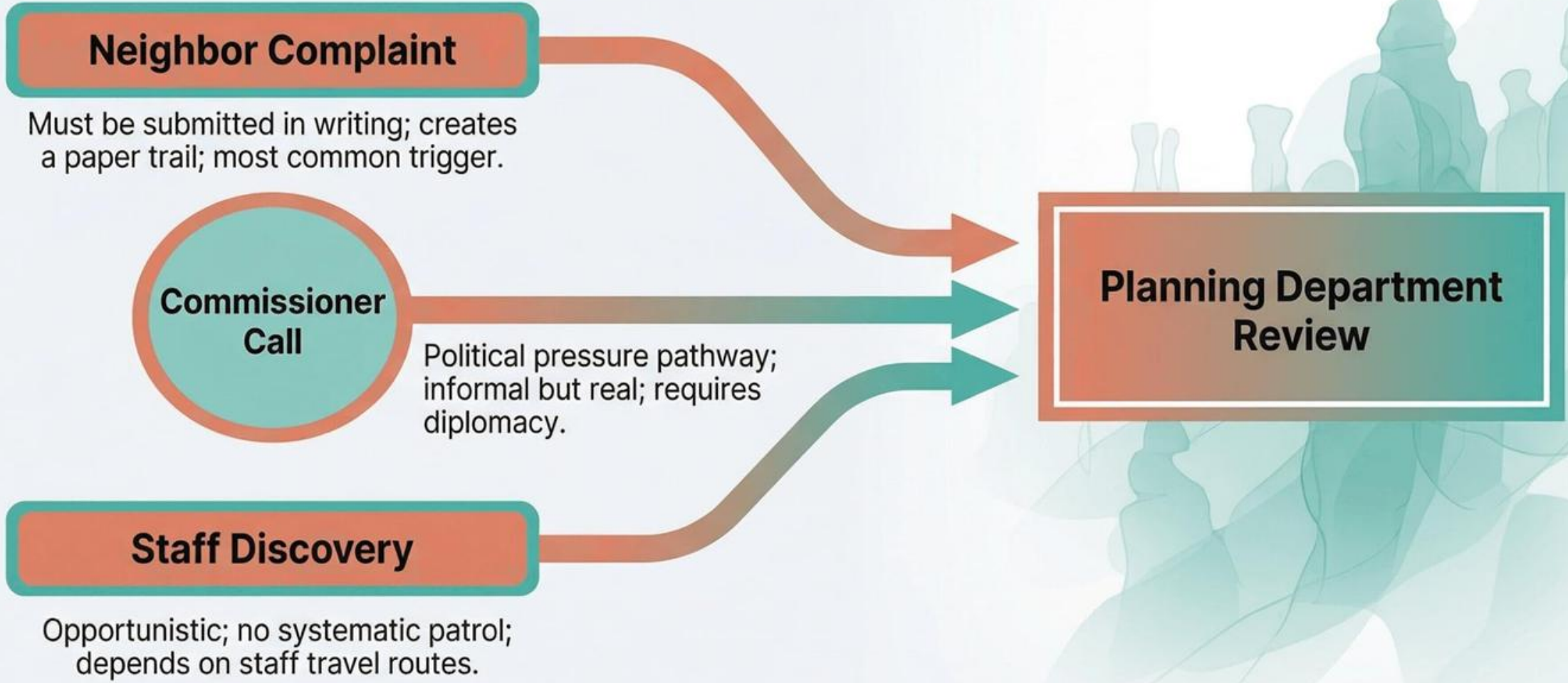
2. Commissioner call
(routed to planning
staff)



3. Staff discovery
(observed while
traveling the county)

“We enforce when we hear about it.”

Three Paths to Enforcement



Not Everything in the Code Gets Enforced

What We Prioritize

- ✓ Short-term rental violations (neighbor-reported)
- ✓ Unpermitted structures with safety concerns
- ✓ Zoning use violations in sensitive areas

What Often Goes Unaddressed

- Minor setback violations
- Agricultural nuisance complaints
- Long-standing non-conforming uses

“Limited staff means triage, **not** total enforcement.”

STRs Are Reshaping Rural Enforcement Demands



- Tourism economy = high STR density relative to population



- Neighbor complaints most often relate to noise, parking, occupancy



- State legislation shapes what counties can and cannot regulate



- Enforcement is reactive — no proactive inspection program


In Small Counties, Relationships Are the Enforcement Mechanism

- Everyone knows everyone — enforcement decisions are visible and personal
- Transparency and consistency build (or erode) trust
- Informal resolution often preferred over formal citation
- The planner as mediator, not just regulator



“The code is the last resort.
The conversation comes first.”

What Works in a Resource-Constrained County

1. Written complaints create accountability — for everyone.
 2. Commissioner involvement can accelerate or complicate resolution.
 3. Staff visibility in the field matters — even without enforcement intent.
 4. Informal resolution saves time and preserves relationships.
 5. Prioritize by impact, not just by complaint volume.
- 

The Gap Between Code and Capacity

Key Points (Wish List)



- A part-time dedicated code enforcement officer
- A simple online complaint portal
- Clearer prioritization criteria in county ordinance
- Regional cooperation with neighboring counties



Rural Enforcement Is Different — And That's Okay

1. Reactive enforcement can still be fair and effective with the right process

2. Community trust is a resource — protect it in every enforcement decision

3. Honest triage is better than the illusion of full compliance

Thank You

Questions & Discussion



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Enforcement

Steve Pastorik, CD Director

Organizational Structure

- Code Enforcement
- Community Development
 - Building Inspections
 - Planning and Zoning
 - Business Support Officer
 - Residential Rental Enforcement Officer
 - Planner assigned to review business licenses for zoning compliance
- Boarding Home Task Force

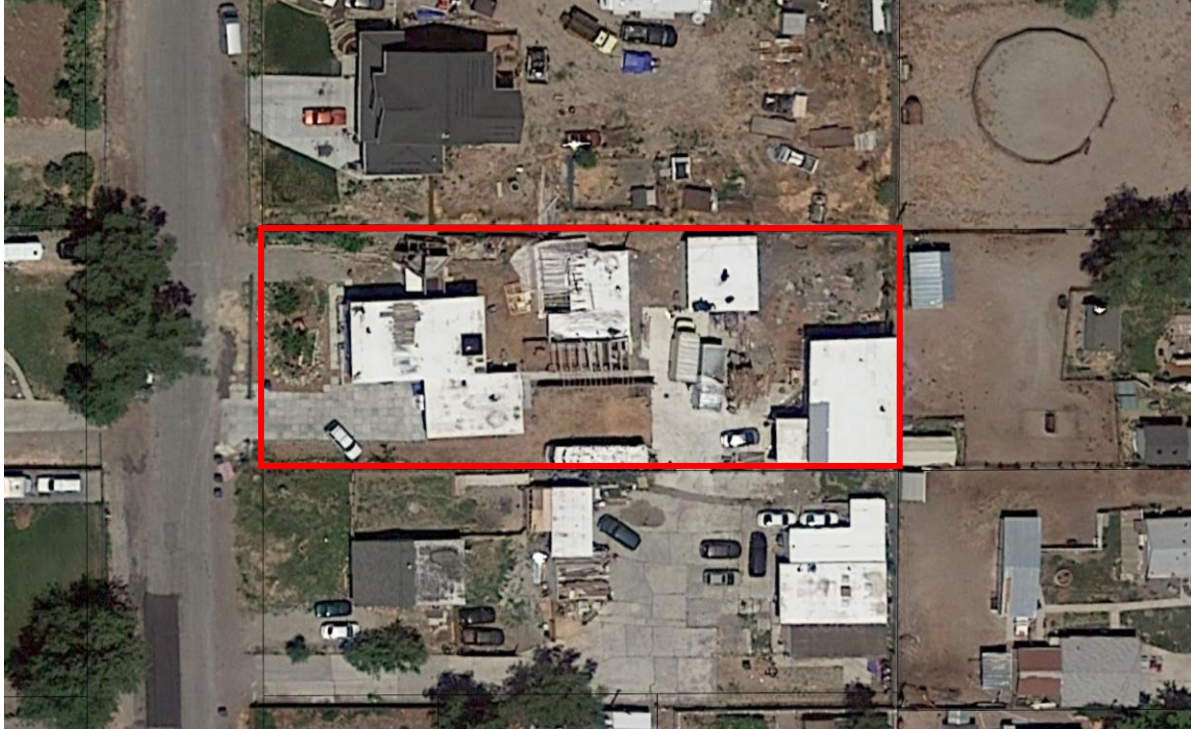
Code Enforcement

- Enforces ordinances in residential areas
- Typical violations include items like:
 - Outside storage/solid waste
 - Inoperable vehicles
 - Weeds/landscaping
 - Parking surfacing
 - Commercial vehicle parking
 - Fences
 - Graffiti

Building Inspections

- Enforces Building Code
- Violations center around a lack of a permit/inspections:
 - Detached structures like garages or sheds
 - Remodels
 - Additions

2017



2025



Planning and Zoning

- Enforces ordinances in primarily commercial areas and on boarding homes
- Typical actions:
 - Helping planners get projects to the finish line
 - Proactively enforcing ordinances along major roads
 - Ensuring that established sites comply with approved plans and conditions of approval through license reviews and enforcement cases
 - Enforcing against problem rental properties

Before Enforcement



After Enforcement



Boarding Home Task Force

• Task Force Members

- Residential Rental Enforcement Officer
- Zoning Administrator
- Chief Code Enforcement Officer
- City Attorney
- Deputy Building Official
- Crime Analyst

• Sources for Evidence

- Police reports and body cam footage
- On-line ads or listings
- County records
- Building permits
- Business licenses
- Code enforcement history

Enforcement Tools

- Administrative Warning
 - Administrative Citation
 - Courtesy Notice
 - Notice of Violation (NOV)
 - Administrative Hearing
 - Abatement
- Affidavit of Non-Compliance
 - Business License
 - Restrictive Covenants
 - Certificate of Occupancy
 - Development Agreement

Penalties

- **Admin. Citation (Non-Rental)**
 - 1st Violation: \$100
 - 2nd Violation: \$200
 - 3rd Violation : \$500
- **Admin. Citation (Rental)**
 - 1st Violation: \$500 to \$1,000
 - 2nd Violation: \$1,000 to \$2,000
- **NOV (Non-Rental)**
 - \$25/violation/day
- **NOV (Rental)**
 - Level 1: \$500 to \$1,000/violation/day
 - Level 2: \$1,000 to \$5,000/violation/day
- **Abatements: recoup actual cleanup costs, record lien**

Example of Prioritization

- All rental properties are required to have a license.
- Based on County Assessor records, we know there are unlicensed rental properties.
- Beyond sending a letter to the property owners, the City has not been pursuing enforcement unless there are other violations on the property.



The background of the slide is a dense, overlapping collage of colorful sticky notes. The colors include shades of blue, green, pink, yellow, and light purple. Each sticky note has a large, black, hand-drawn question mark on it. The notes are scattered across the entire frame, creating a textured and busy visual effect.

Questions and Thank you!

Bret Howser
Kaden Figgins
Steve Pastorik
JJ

