

U N I O N



Newsletter Published for Union Residents

SPRING 2010

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City Council

Meetings are at 7:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Monday of each month at City Hall, 118 North Main Street (except for July and August when only one meeting will be held each month, July 12 and Aug. 9).

Mayor Patricia Goudy
867-5759
Vice Mayor
Michael O'Callaghan
836-0177

Councilman David Blackwell, 832-8332
Councilman John Bruns
836-9248
Councilwoman Jean Kyle
832-2811

Councilwoman Helen Oberer, 836-3269
Councilwoman Robin Perkins, 832-3902

Egg Hunt in Union!

Don't forget to hop on down to the Annual Egg Hunt! Join in the fun on **Saturday, April 3, 10:30 a.m., at Phillipsburg-Union Community Park**. Watch for the Easter Bunny arriving by escort on a Union fire engine! Have your photo

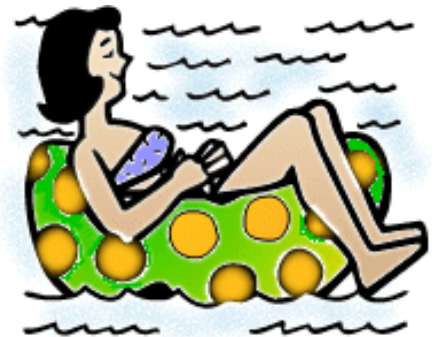
taken with the Bunny, plus enjoy punch, cookies, and the fun of finding more than 3,000 hidden eggs. Age groups: 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, and 7-8. Families are asked to bring non-perishable food items for a special collection for those in need in our community. The City of Union's Park Board and Union

VFW 5434 are event sponsors. Also: Firehouse waffles will be on sale the same morning from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Union Fire Station on West Martindale Road.

Park news

The City has installed a new basketball court at the former Union pool site, and the goals/

nets that are at the Martindale Road Park will be moved over to the new courts. The new site is located at the end of Parkgrove Drive west of City Hall.



A reminder about swimming pools - please see page 4.

Spirit of Union Award

The City of Union's Park Board is gearing up for this season's Spirit of Union program. The Park Board established the Spirit of Union Award in 1997 to encourage exterior enhancements of residential and business properties. The award recognizes those who make exceptional landscaping improvements. Call the City at 836-8624 or nominate online at www.ci.union.oh.us/spirit.html.

NABL signups!

It's almost spring and that means Northmont Amateur Baseball League (NABL) registration is open for kids ages 5-18. The league, now in its 53rd year, includes T-ball, baseball, and slow-pitch softball. Opening day is April 24. For more information about the NABL, call Charles Wehrman at 836-2652.

Free City tax prep service

Do you need help with your City income taxes? A tax



continued, page 2

specialist from the Vandalia Tax Office will be at the City of Union on Thursday, March 25, from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and on Saturday, March 27, from 8 a.m. until noon to help residents with their City income tax questions. The City of Vandalia administers Union's 1 percent credit income tax. The tax prep service is offered for free to Union residents on a first-come, first-served basis. Please bring relevant tax information with you. If you have questions, please call 415-2240.

Please note that all residents of Union 18 years of age and older must file an annual City tax return by April 15 whether or not any income was earned or any tax is due.

Please visit www.vandaliaohio.org and click on the tax section to electronically file your

taxes. Tax forms are also available at this Web site.

Citywide garage sale June 10-12

No permit is required to participate in the annual citywide garage sale this June 10-12. Please call the City by June 1 to let us know if you will be participating, and we'll include your address in our garage sale ad in the newspaper. The garage sale is a great way to do some spring cleaning! Plus: The City of Union Fire & Rescue Department plans to sell firehouse waffles at the Union Fire Station on West Martindale Road on Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., during the garage sale.

Pay utility bills online

The City of Union launched a new utility software that enables resi-



dents to view their City utility accounts online -- via the Internet -- 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can view your current balance, last payment date, payment amount, and water consumption history. Please visit the City's Web site at www.ci.union.oh.us and click on "Utility Bill" to link to the utility Web interface program. You can also pay your bills online, for a small convenience fee, through a secure online credit card transaction. Residents can also have their utility bill automatically debited from their checking account each month. To receive a form to sign up for auto debit, visit our Web site, stop by City Hall or call us at 836-8624.

Enrollment opens for Homestead program

Homeowners turning 65 in 2010 have until June 7 to sign up

Homeowners who turn 65 at any point in 2010 are eligible for the Homestead program and are encouraged to sign up with the Montgomery County Auditor. Enrollment is open until June 7 and applications are available in the Auditor's office or by calling 225-4341. The Homestead exemption program brings

property tax relief to homeowners age 65 and older and the permanently disabled. There are no longer any income requirements, but newly eligible recipients (those turning 65) must sign up with the Auditor's office.

Homeowners already enrolled in Homestead do not need to reapply. Qualified applicants who missed last year's deadline may also sign up before June 7 and still get a reduction on last year's taxes as well as this year's. Current homestead recipients do not need to reapply or do anything unless they have moved or had some change in their status. Potential new applicants are encouraged to call 225-4341 or log onto www.mcauditor.org for more information.

Shape our region with MVRPC program

GOING PLACES - an Integrated Land Use Vision for the Miami Valley Region - is an initiative to create a road map for the future of land development in the Miami Valley. Currently, the major focus is to collect information from people who live and work in the region about what they envision for the future of the region. Do you have a



vision for the Miami Valley Region in 2040? YOUR ideas and innovations are needed to help make the Miami Valley Region a better place to live, work, and play! Come and join the Going Places discussion at any of the workshops in your area to share YOUR vision!

Nearby meetings:

Thursday, March 18, 2010

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Fairmont High School

3301 Shroyer Road

Kettering OH 45429

Wednesday, March 31, 2010

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Center for Regional Cooperation

1100 West 3rd Street

Dayton OH 45407

Wednesday, April 7, 2010

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Friendship Village

5790 Denlinger Road

Trotwood OH 45426-1898

Going Places is sponsored by the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission. For more information about the Going Places initiative, visit www.mvrpc.org/rlu or contact staff at 223-6323.

Questions about accessing local social services?

HelpLink is a social service referral agency funded by the United Way that can help you with questions about accessing social services. Dial 2 -1 -1 for HelpLink.

Pre-sale inspections required

Union City Council passed an ordinance in 2006 requiring a pre-sale inspection and certificate of occupancy before a property is sold. The legislation affects all properties in Union, including residential and business properties. Before selling or transferring a property, an owner will need to request a pre-sale inspection conducted by a City code official. The inspector will note any exterior repairs or other exterior work necessary to eliminate any unsafe or hazardous conditions in order to comply with the City's Fire, Zoning, and Property Maintenance codes and other City ordinances. Inspection will include the condition and placement of storage sheds, fences, etc. The inspection and list of needed repairs will be part of the process of issuing the required certificate of

occupancy. The inspection will cost sellers a total of \$50 for both the initial inspection and re-inspection after violations have been repaired. The seller is responsible for making repairs to correct any defective aspects of the property unless the new owner is willing to formally assume such responsibility by signing a Transfer of Responsibility Agreement. A copy of this agreement would then be kept at City Hall. Buyers should still have their own interior and exterior inspections conducted. Applications are available at City Hall and at www.ci.union.oh.us/build.html (click on "Pre-Sale Application"). Call 836-8624 for more information.

Building Dept. handles more permits

The City of Union Building Department can now issue permits for residential properties for all electrical, gas, and heating/air-conditioning (HVAC) work. Permits for commercial properties still need to go through Montgomery County. Permits are also required for such installations as hot water heaters, furnaces, air conditioners, gas lines and piping, electric lines for pools and

hot tubs, any changes in electrical wiring and upgrades in electrical service. Residents can now come to City Hall for these permits instead of driving to the Montgomery County office, and inspections can be easily and quickly completed through Union. If you have any questions, please contact City Hall at 836-8624.

Permits for special projects are required

As we head into the home improvement season, please take note of the permits required of certain projects. For a complete list of required permits, please contact the City or refer to the Property Maintenance Code information inside this newsletter. Here are a few of the projects that require permits:

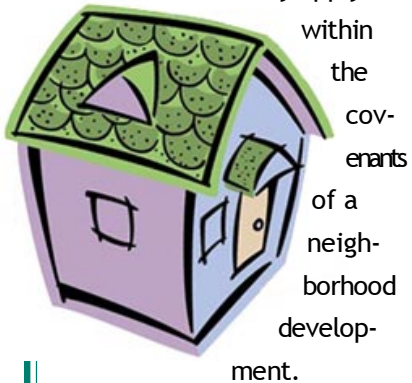
Temporary storage

containers. Temporary storage containers such as Portable on Demand (POD) containers are permitted in Union as long as a building permit is issued. PODs may be placed in the driveway only, out of the City's right-of-way, and for a duration of 30 days or less, unless an extension is approved by the City's building and zoning inspector. Temporary

storage containers cannot be placed in the street.

Storage sheds. Storage sheds require a building permit. These structures can't exceed 12 feet by 12 feet, with a total height of no more than 12 feet. Sheds need to be at least 10 feet away from the main structure and no closer than 6 feet to the property line or off any easements.

Material and construction of these structures must be of acceptable quality. There are additional requirements; plus, other restrictions may apply



Call 836-8624 to contact the City's building and zoning inspector for more information.

Patios. Patios also require a building permit. They must be of 4-inch concrete on 4 inches of compacted gravel. Call 836-8624 to contact the City's building and zoning inspector.

Swimming pools. Building permits are required for all swimming pools of 24

inches or more in depth or greater than 150 square feet in surface area, including inflatable pools. The swimming pool or the entire property on which it is located must be walled or fenced to prevent uncontrolled access by children from the street or adjacent properties. The wall or fence must be at least 6 feet in height, in good condition, and with a gate and lock. Another option is a deck package in which the top rail of the deck is 6 feet above the ground and has a ladder that swings up and locks to prevent access to the pool. Hot tubs and spas are subject to the same regulations except a locking cover may be used instead of a fence. There are additional requirements. Call 836-8624 to contact the City's building and zoning inspector for more information.

Union Property Owners, for a complete list of required permits, please contact the City of Union or see the Property Maintenance Code tucked in this newsletter.

Water-wise yard and garden tips

Landscape watering is one of the biggest users of water, but savvy gardeners know there are a number of easy ways to save on the water bill and maintain a beautiful yard and garden. Clean Wisconsin, an environmental advocacy group, offer these tips for conservation and beautification:

1. Direct home downspouts toward the lawn or a rain barrel, not the pavement. Not only is rainwater free, it is not chlorinated and therefore a great choice for plants.

Rain barrels have become more popular in recent years, come in a variety of sizes with lids to prevent mosquitoes and are easy to use.

2. Use drip irrigation to apply water and nutrients directly to plants' roots at a controlled rate. Drip irrigation helps maintain healthy plants and specifically waters only the plant, not surrounding weeds, as sprinklers tend to do.

3. Add compost or similar organic matter to your soil. Adding at least one inch per year enhances the water-holding capacity and improves soil texture and composition.

4. Apply mulch. Use of organic or inert mulches

reduces water evaporation, erosion and weed growth, while enhancing the aesthetics of your garden.

5. Water before 10 AM.

Daytime watering means more evaporation during the heat of the day. Afternoon or evening watering may promote fungus or other lawn diseases.

6. Plan ahead of time. By grouping plants into high, moderate and low water-using zones, you can take advantage of the characteristics in your yard.

7. Consider the best type of groundcover for your yard. Turf grass is a water- and labor-intensive choice. Fescue grasses tend to require less maintenance. Also, consider using less grass and more low-maintenance perennials or groundcovers. As an added benefit, choose water-thrifty perennials that are native to your region.

8. Mow high. Set your mower blade at three inches or higher. Thick grass helps prevent weed growth. Be sure your mower blades are sharpened to reduce water loss from your lawn. When you consider the total surface area of cut grass, wasted water can add up quickly.

9. Aerate your lawn once a year. Aerating is a simple process that removes cores

of soil to stimulate grass root growth, enhances oxygen levels in soil, and loosens compact soil to increase the availability of water and nutrients.

Aerators can be rented at lawn and hardware stores.

10. Perform appropriate maintenance. In order to keep plants healthy and water bills down, perform regular maintenance like pruning, weeding, efficient watering, and pest control. Minimize the addition of fertilizers and pesticides. Extra fertilizer actually increases water consumption, and phosphorous-containing products that run off into storm drains feed the weeds in our lakes and rivers. Moreover, fertilizers and pesticides may affect the health of pets kept in your yard. If uncertain, ask your veterinarian.

Pet reminders

Dogs and cats must be secured on the property of the owner, either by way of leash, fence, or contained inside the home. Dogs and cats are not allowed to run loose. While on walks, dogs should be tethered on a leash no longer than 6 feet. Also, owners should take measures to prevent a



A grant from the Montgomery County Solid Waste District helped the City of Union purchase this new entrance sign and fencing material at Union Community Park. The sign and fencing are made from 100-percent recycled plastics. The City also installed decorative lighting at the Community Park entrance and parking lot.

dog’s prolonged howling or barking. Vicious animals, including vicious dogs, are prohibited in the City of Union. Vicious animals are those that bite or have a propensity to cause harm to humans or animals. Residents should limit the number of dogs and cats to no more than two of each per household. Owners should take care to clean up after pets. When it rains, bacteria from pet waste can run into our streets and storm drains, polluting our rivers and streams. By City Ordinance, pet owners must immediately pick up after

their pets on walks and also routinely take care to keep their property clean of pet waste. Please call the City at 836-8624 if you have questions or need to complain about a nuisance.

Open burning

Open burning is regulated by the Regional Air Pollution Control Agency. Citizens may have appropriate-sized fires for cooking, warmth, and recreation (camp fires/ fire pits). The fires MUST be attended at all times and MUST have a fire extinguisher or hose at hand. Only clean, dry wood can be

burned (no plastic, tar, garbage, dead animals, building materials, rubber, wire, tires, etc.). No burning during air pollution alerts and on windy days. Any damage to property due to burning is the responsibility of the person doing the burning, including any soiled laundry, and fires that spread and damage landscaping, structures, or any other property. Most homeowner insurance policies DO NOT cover these claims. Please contact the Fire Chief when planning on having a recreational fire.



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Water Report inside

The City of Union's Consumer Confidence Report for Water for Testing Year 2009 is inside this newsletter.

Maintenance heads-up

Tucked within the center of this newsletter is information that outlines requirements of the City of Union's Property Maintenance Code. Thank you for keeping Union looking beautiful!

Your participation in the U.S. Census will help our City!

Questionnaires for United States Census 2010 arrive in March either by U.S. mail or hand-delivery. Your participation is important. Every year, the federal government allocates more than \$300 billion to states and communities based, in part, on census data -- including for community services and construction of highways. Census data are used to determine locations for retail stores, schools, hospitals, new housing developments, and other community facilities.

Census data determine boundaries for state and local legislative and congressional districts -- including the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives. ***With only 10 questions, the Census takes about 10 minutes to complete.*** By law, the Census Bureau cannot share responses with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities. When the Census arrives at your home, please take a few minutes to complete it! ***Your participation will help our community.***



Holiday decorating contest winners

The residents in Union continue to share their holiday spirit each year with brighter, more creative decorations on their homes and in their yards. The City of Union wishes to thank everyone for their contributions in decorating the City for the holidays, and we hope Union residents enjoyed looking at these festive homes. **The winning holiday-decorated homes selected by the City's Park Board were:** 100 Waldwick, 104 Irongate Drive, 630 Morning Glory, 19 Greencliff, 154 Westrock Farm, 109 Krug Drive, 100 Cochran, 103 Ewing, 104 Ewing, 112 Ewing, 319 Carol, 138 McCraw, 128 Westrock Farm, 106 Woodard, 128 Lightner, 117 Lightner, 116 Parkgrove, 108 Walden Farm, 204 Riesling, 63 Sweet Potato Ridge.

City of



Union

Guide to

Property Maintenance & Required Permits

This enclosure to the Spring 2010 City Newsletter generally outlines the requirements of the Property Maintenance Code of Union. Please use this checklist to evaluate your property. We appreciate your compliance with these important community regulations. If you have questions, please call us at 836-8624. We're happy to discuss specifics with you.

Why a Code?

The Property Maintenance Code sets minimum standards so a property owner clearly knows what maintenance is expected. Plus, it provides assurance to all residents that their neighbors will do the same. In general, the exteriors of all properties in the City of Union should be structurally sound, and free of nuisances, unsanitary conditions, and hazards, to ensure the safety of occupants, pedestrians, and others, and to help protect property values. It is the property owner's responsibility to comply with property maintenance measures. To further protect property values in our neighborhoods, the City of Union also passed legislation requiring the exterior inspection of properties before they are sold.

Pre-Sale Inspections

An exterior inspection is required of all properties before they can be sold. The current property owner should stop by City Hall to complete an application and pay an inspection fee of \$50. A City of Union building inspector then will inspect the exterior of the property, including the exterior of the building and any other structures on the property, including driveways, storage sheds, etc. Any violations to the City's Property Maintenance Code will need to be resolved before the property is sold, or arrangements will need to be made to transfer the required repairs to the new property owner. Adding a pre-sale inspection is an expansion of the existing zoning code and is designed to prevent deterioration of properties. The pre-sale inspection does not replace other

inspections such as those for termites, plumbing, interior, etc.

Who's Affected?

All owners of properties or structures within the City of Union must comply with the Property Maintenance Code.

Who Enforces the Code?

The City Building & Zoning Department has the responsibility to enforce the code.

How Will It be Enforced?

It will be enforced initially by a formal notice of violation with the Property Maintenance Code brochure attached when inspectors observe significant deficiencies on a property. Later,

specific legal steps may be implemented to gain compliance and protect the rights of all residents.

Why Comply?

Property maintenance benefits property owners and neighborhoods by protecting property values. Compliance also avoids possible fines that may be imposed if property owners fail to correct property deficiencies.

CHECKLIST:

Refuse. Properties should be free of broken glass, stumps, garbage, and other debris.

Treatment of Trash Receptacles.

Trash containers must be removed from the curb within 12 hours of trash collection. The containers should be stored inside the home's garage or at the rear of the home.

Natural Growth and Weeds. Dead trees and limbs or other natural growth that is rotting should be removed. Vines, grasses, rank vegetation, and noxious weeds, any of which that are 6 inches or more in height, should be cut down.

Landscaping. Properties should be maintained, with lawns, hedges, and bushes kept from becoming overgrown or decayed. Grass may not exceed a height of 6 inches. All trees and bushes along sidewalks and streets should be trimmed back to provide a clear height of 10 feet above the surface of the sidewalk and 12 feet above the surface of the street. Overhanging branches should be trimmed back to the property line. If a property backs up to a City-owned greenspace, that area may not be used for gardening, planting of bushes, flowers, trees, etc. If there are any questions concerning this space, then please contact the City's zoning inspector.

Yard Waste. Yard waste should be disposed of properly. Or, if yard waste is composted, it must be maintained properly, and kept in the rear yard, so as to not create a

nuisance for adjacent properties. Dumping of grass and weed clippings, tree limbs, or other debris on private property or City parks/greenspaces is prohibited.

Foundation Walls and Basements.

They should be structurally sound, free from defects and damage, and capable of bearing loads safely. Basements should be sound and maintained to prevent the entrance of rodents, wood-boring insects, rain, or water runoff.

Chimney and Flue-Vent Attachments.

These features must be maintained to be structurally sound, free from defects, and capable of performing the functions for which they were originally designed.

General Maintenance. The exterior walls, trim, doors, and window casings of every structure and accessory building should be structurally sound and kept painted and/or coated to prevent decay. Paint should be lead-free. Exteriors should be free of broken or unusable windows, crumbling stone or brick, peeling paint, or other conditions that reflect deterioration.

Roofs, Gutters, and Downspouts.

Roofs should be maintained to be free of leaks and rot. Drainage should be collected in suitable downspouts, which may discharge into splash blocks or other devices provided that no excess water flows into adjoining properties or over sidewalks. Downspouts should be free of clogs and rust. Connecting any pipe carrying roof water or yard drainage to a sanitary sewer is prohibited.

Design Schemes. Garish design schemes must be modified to eliminate obvious negative impacts on surrounding properties.

Junk, Inoperable, or Unlicensed Vehicles. Properties must be free of junk, inoperable, or unlicensed vehicles. Repairing any such vehicle or trailer is prohibited anywhere on the exterior property, including on the front driveway.

Utility Trailers. These trailers must be stored in the rear yard only.

Trailers, RVs, Mobile Homes, and Boats. Trailers, recreational vehicles, tents, garages, or temporary buildings cannot be used as residences. RVs, trailers, and boats more than 6 feet in height cannot be parked or stored in the front or side yard of residential properties, except for a loading or unloading period, not to exceed 48 hours. RVs, trailers, and boats less than 6 feet in height may be parked or stored in the side yard of residential districts if screened by a 6-foot solid or privacy fence. Temporary parking of a mobile home is permitted for up to 48 hours; it cannot be used as a residence.

continued on next page

Property Maintenance & Required Permits

continued

Operable Vehicles and Commercial Trucks.

All operable vehicles should be parked on a paved surface. Parking or storing any truck or commercial vehicle more than 11,500 pounds is prohibited in the front yard, including on the front driveway.

Porches. Foundations should be sound; the porch, guardrails, handrails, and porch stairs should be safe and without rot. Porches require a building permit.

Additions or Separate Structures.

They should be sound and capable of serving their original purpose. Applicable permits should have been obtained for their construction. If the structure has a garage door, it must have a paved driveway. If a garage is to be converted to living space, the permit will require the existing driveway to be enlarged to accommodate the loss of a parking space. The enlargement of the driveway will not be required if the property is in compliance with parking requirements. When converting a garage into a living area, the construction must include adding a footer under the garage door, leveling the floor, and adding appropriate insulation.

Driveways and Other Paved Areas.

All off-street parking areas must be either asphalt, concrete, brick, brick paver, or other similar hard-surfaced material. Specific requirements are available at the City Building. Permits are required for replacing deteriorating concrete or blacktop. Best results occur when the original, crumbling layer is removed. Sealing a driveway does not require a building permit.

Fences, Walls, and Other Non-Residential Exterior Structures.

Accessories such as fences, walls, signs, etc., should be maintained and firmly anchored, with painted and/or protected surfaces to prevent decay and hazard. All fences and signs require a permit. Regulations may vary among subdivisions.

Reconstruction of Walls and Siding.

Reconstruction of these features should be of standard quality and appearance commensurate with the character of the neighborhood.

Free From Infestation. All areas of properties should be maintained to prevent infestation from rodents, insects, and other animals.

Pools. Pools are regulated in Union for

safety reasons. Even inflatable pools, if the sides are 24 inches or higher, require a building permit. Check with the City's zoning inspector for details.

Storage Sheds. Storage sheds require a building permit and must be located in the rear yard. Check with the City's zoning inspector for regulations regarding the size, foundation, and placement on the property.

Temporary Storage Containers. Containers such as PODs (Portable on Demand) are permitted but do require a permit. The location and time used are specified in the City of Union's building code.

Permanent Signs and Billboards. All signs and billboards exposed to public view must be maintained or otherwise removed. Permits are required.

Home Occupations. Generally, office-related home occupations that do not

change the appearance of the residential property or increase traffic on the street are permitted, but please contact the City first about the proposed home occupation.

Pets. Dogs must be secured on the property of the owner, either by way of leash, fence, or contained inside the home. Dogs are not allowed to run loose while on walks; they should be tethered on a leash no longer than 6 feet. By City Ordinance, pet owners must immediately pick up after their pets on walks and in public areas and also routinely take care to keep their property clean of pet waste. Also, owners should take measures to prevent a dog's prolonged howling or barking. Vicious animals, including vicious dogs, are prohibited in the City of Union. Vicious animals are those that bite or have a propensity to cause harm to humans or animals. Residents must limit the number of dogs and cats to no more than two of each per household. Please call the City at 836-8624 if you need more information.

REQUIRED PERMITS

The City of Union requires permits for certain projects, structures, and activities. Some projects, such as electrical, heating, and plumbing projects, require a permit from Montgomery County. Below is a list of items requiring permits. Please contact the City of Union for details about each permit.

- Satellite dishes
- TV and radio towers
- New home construction
- New business construction
- Structural remodeling, including converting garages to livable spaces
- Rehabilitation
- Room additions
- Storage sheds
- Garages
- Driveways
- Patios/patio enclosures
- Decks
- Fences
- Pools
- Peddlers/solicitors
- Garage sales
- Signs
- Sidewalks
- Fireplaces/wood stoves
- PODs (Portable on Demand) storage containers
- Pre-sale property inspections
- Sewer lateral replacement. Residents must notify City Hall if they plan to replace their sewer lateral. Because most sewer laterals are connected to the City's sewer main within the street, either the contractor or the homeowner must post a \$500 bond to ensure that any sidewalk, curb, or street asphalt is properly replaced. The City will inspect these repairs before releasing the bond.

DEFINITION OF YARDS

Corner and regular lots have different definitions of "front yard." Use this representation to understand the definition as it applies in the City of Union Property Maintenance Code.

