



## Residents want corner stores cleaned up

By Denise Dick (Contact)

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Attendees complained of littering, loitering and unsightly store buildings.

YOUNGSTOWN — Lottie and Eddie Lockett love their Volney Road neighborhood and they want problems such as corner stores in disrepair cleaned up.

The couple, who have lived in their home since 1975, were two of the roughly 100 people who attended the Idora Neighborhood Association meeting Wednesday night at the Rescue Mission Distribution Center. Corner stores were the meeting topic.

Lottie pointed to the corner of Glenwood and Warren avenues as a problem.

“The South Side is going to be beautiful again,” she said. “We mean business this time.”

James London, association president, said there are five stores within a 0.7-mile stretch on Glenwood Avenue, four of which sell alcohol. He points to about 100 calls for service in the last four years around those stores that range from homicide to robbery to drunkenness and menacing.

In his three years of living in the neighborhood, London said he’s witnessed littering, loitering and buildings in disrepair. He also hears gunshots at night.

“It looks terrible out there,” he said.

London has also received calls from other association members about drug dealing at the stores, he said.

“Am I going to find needles next? Razor blades? Unused drugs that maybe our kids will use?” London asked.

Several city officials attended the meeting to hear residents’ concerns and answer questions.

Police Chief Jimmy Hughes said he would look into the feasibility of bike or foot patrols in the Glenwood Avenue area. Lt. Dave McKnight, head of the police department vice squad, said the department uses a number of grants to try to address problems throughout the city. One program concentrates officers in “hot spots” primarily on the South Side, the lieutenant said.

McKnight said he can include the Glenwood Avenue area among those the program targets.

Fire Chief John O’Neill said his department will check the corner stores to ensure they comply with the fire code. If the fire inspector sees a violation that pertains to another city department’s jurisdiction, it will be referred accordingly, the chief said.

Other city departments attending the meeting were public works, housing inspection, litter control and recycling and zoning. The health department wasn't represented.

All of the officials said they would look into the issues raised by meeting attendees within a month and meet with the group again in six weeks.

Saladdin Imeishat, owner of Big A's Drive Thru on Glenwood, was the only corner store owner who attended the meeting. "I'm taking beer and wine out of my place," Imeishat said.

He's also working to install new siding on the building and make other improvements, he said.

The store owner, however, said he's concerned that there aren't activities for young people in that area of town. "All they've got is time on their hands," he said.