

Dear Council Members:

I believe that if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem. Over a year ago I vowed to be part of solving what I and others consider a problem – the general landscape and upkeep of Tega Cay – dominantly the older or “historic” sections of the city.

Specifically, last year a small group of homeowners in The Anchorage started discussing how to revamp the entrance of our neighborhood. The entrance had (and still has) overgrown and dead shrubs, weeds and a lack of mulch. A few of us worked on fixing what we could without the use of heavy equipment. When I came up with a major plan to overhaul the entrance (hiring and paying vendors), I was told that it was city owned property and that as homeowners we could not do what was necessary to truly fix these areas.

Long story short, I met with Charlie and Tim and a plan was devised. Two broken promises later, very little has been done to fix the entrance of The Anchorage. I also spoke with Councilman Kirby about the Anchorage entrance AND maintenance of Tega Cay in general. He agreed wholeheartedly with my assessment and it is my understanding that he too has spoken with Charlie about the condition of common areas off Windward Drive. Regardless, the work that has been done – well let’s just say that it is lacking in effort and results.

Beyond The Anchorage, there are numerous landscape and maintenance issues that reflect poorly on our community and decrease our property values. [See related pictorial pdf “tour.”](#)

In looking at overall opportunities to improve our city, here are additional suggestions:

1. Revitalization of Historic Tega Cay

There comes a point in time that a community, a city, or a street becomes decayed if a serious effort is not made to update and rejuvenate the affected areas. That time has come for much of “historical” Tega Cay. Obviously some of the houses are older. Some are poorly maintained – rental slums if you will. Are we going to let that continue . . . Affecting ALL of Tega Cay or are we going to do something about it? What ordinances exist that holds homeowners responsible for the construction project that NEVER ends? The grass that is never mowed? The overgrown “For Sale” property or foreclosed home? Other cities have effective ordinances for these situations. The challenge (as I know it) is to consistently enforce these ordinances.

Can the city not work WITH citizens to come up with revitalization plans? Are there grants available? Would matching public and private funds be an option? Fundraising? Look what the City of Rock Hill has accomplished. Also note the before and after picture of what a traffic light looks like on poles versus lines. <http://www.cityofrockhill.com/home/showdocument?id=6810>

2. Signage

The street signs, the traffic signs, the “rule” signs, and the pathway signs are abundant and inconsistent in their design and the materials they are made from. The “white signs” break easily and mildew and are never cleaned. Not to mention that I have never seen so many crooked signs in my life. A level will go a long way during the installation process. Can we not decrease the size of some of these signs, double up signs on the same post, and incorporate an ordinance for our “city” signs that is reflective of our otherwise strict sign ordinance. Drive through Baxter to get an idea of what I am referring to. Also in the before and after photos of the Rock Hill effort, note the difference that the signage makes. The signs are made of durable metal and they simply look better. When you turn onto Windward – dead

center in the decayed island is a bold “No Outlet” sign. That is the “welcome” to what I estimate to be 1000 homes – followed by more decay.

3. **Tega Cay Drive**

I’ve been told that it is a “State” issue but what can we do collectively - politically to get Tega Cay Drive updated? We all drive this road - pot holes, lack of drainage, too narrow turning lanes. It’s sad.

4. **“Art in the Park”**

To be such a phenomenally naturally beautiful city full of successful citizens, we sure do lack culture. There is not one statue or piece of art to speak of. Again, look at Rock Hill. When I say the “circles” at Windward and Pitcarin Park are outdated – we need to think beyond mowing down weeds and installing flowers in old beds – how we can combine nature and art? Art students are a great way to procure sculptures at reasonable prices or corporate American will often sponsor such art projects in a city. Simply put Tega Cay needs to come into the 21st century and reflect the diversity of our citizens. As it is now, our “design” looks 1970s trailer park.

5. **Outsourcing**

In my opinion, the level of landscape maintenance and installation that is needed throughout Tega Cay, requires professionals that are not first obligated to the operational demands of a city. The equipment, know-how and eager to work laborers that a professional landscape crew can bring to our city is desperately needed. Watching our staff work on a landscape project pains me – greatly. Molasses moves faster.

I’m sure there are lots of reasons for NOT accomplishing such lofty goals – the main one I’m guessing is funding. But with every opportunity there is a solution IF the powers to be make it a priority. I just find it hard to believe that such a small city (in terms of geography) with such high taxes can’t accomplish a simple goal of being aesthetically pleasing from beginning to end – new or old. I am ignorant when it comes to the City’s budget. An area that I will try to educate myself on in the coming months. But from my view, we have LOTS of staff, LOTS of new equipment, a killer City Admin building and trailer trash common areas that increase in decay the further you travel down Tega Cay Drive.

For now, I am sharing my thoughts and opinions with the Council in hopes that an aggressive LONG TERM plan can be developed to restore Tega Cay. I really don’t want to spend my time managing a blog, making FaceBook postings, circulating a petition, derailing personal attacks and writing press releases but if that will help in my efforts, I am willing to go there. And note landscape installation this time of year is a waste of time, money and effort. So the City Admin “Park” that no one will sit in – looks great but have fun keeping it alive. The lack of planning is insane.

Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Jackie Miller
Anchorage Resident