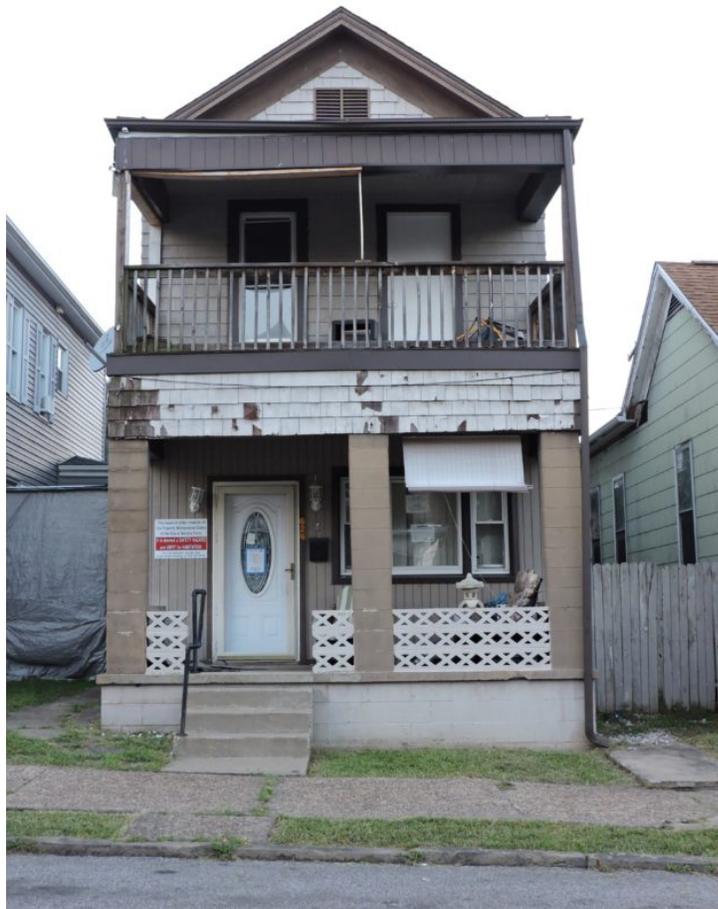


# THE TIMES LEADER

## Rodents in blighted home are pestering residents

September 21, 2017 | Today's Paper SHELLEY HANSON



SHELLEY HANSON TWO WASHINGTON Street residents complained Wednesday about rats coming from this home that has been deemed uninhabitable by the city of Martins Ferry.

MARTINS FERRY — Two Washington Street residents asked Martins Ferry City Council on

Wednesday to remedy a rat problem in their neighborhood they believe is coming from an empty house filled with garbage.

During Wednesday's meeting, residents Bonnie Haskakis and Linda Schultz said some neighbors who live closest to the house have tried to kill the rats using poisoned bait. But the rats keep breeding and coming back, they said.

*"We have rats on our walk and they keep spreading out. I know what can be done, but I don't know what the city can do about it,"* Haskakis said.

Located at 624 Washington St., the house already has been designated by the city as blighted. A large sign with red and black lettering is posted on the front of the house, noting the property is under violation of the city's property maintenance codes, is a safety hazard and *"unfit for habitation."*

Mayor Robert Krajnyak said he would have city workers bait the sewers to help kill the rats and add bait boxes, if necessary. Councilman Robert Hunker said he would look into whether the house had been foreclosed on and who may now own it.

*"It's a house full of trash, furniture, bedding, clothing, leftover food and dirty dishes in the sink,"* Schultz said.

Schultz believes the house is owned by a bank and there have been two unsuccessful attempts to sell it via auction.

*"The bank won't send anyone down to clean it out. ... It's attracted the rats and the rats are going into other properties,"* Schultz said.

Councilman Jack Regis asked whether there are any other laws on the city's books that could help the situation. Law Director Paul Stecker said the city passed an ordinance last year regarding vacant property registrations. He noted a foreclosure shifts the responsibility to the bank, which must secure the property.

*"They don't necessarily have to clean it up, but they do have board it up and secure it,"* Stecker said.