



David Roden, owner of Mountain View Estates, speaks during a second "improve Rossville" community meeting at Simpson United Methodist Church.

STAFF PHOTOS BY ANGELA LEWIS FOSTER

# 'We deserve better'

## Rossville calls for more community improvements

BY TYLER JETT  
STAFF WRITER

Since their first meeting March 1, a group of residents leading the charge to improve the northern end of Walker County have thrown out some vague notions: They want crime to decrease. They want more businesses to move in. They want the neighborhoods to look nice.

But the minutia of how to bring those changes is still being debated. Thus far, they have not had a long list of clear, specific steps.

David Roden and others leading the charge, however, feel their energy alone has at least given them momentum.

Last week, a letter signed by those in attendance at a second meeting presented the most concrete action yet. It ended with a list of demands.

The group wants every elected official in Rossville and Walker County to attend all future meetings. (Walker County Sheriff Steve Wilson, Walker County School Superintendent Damon



Jon Hooper writes suggestions at the second "Improve Rossville" meeting.

Raines and Rossville Mayor Teddy Harris have been to both meetings.)

The group specifically wants to meet with County Commissioner Bebe Heiskell and members of the codes enforcement department to formally present a list of buildings that need "immediate attention." They also want to meet with Heiskell to discuss how they can build "a solid foundation for the future."

Some in attendance last week said their meeting on March 1 already has made an impact on the community, just by forcing people to address what they believe are problems in Rossville. Specifically, the number of rundown

buildings in town.

Jim Hill, one of the leaders of the group — which doesn't have an official name — said that in recent weeks, county workers have removed a stretch of homes that sat abandoned and trashed on James Street for years.

"One day they're here," Hill said. "The next day, they're gone. I guarantee you, folks, all that came from you."

During a discussion period, people in attendance shared ideas for how to improve the community:

- Put more street lights on Wilson Road, suggested one woman.
- Put more sidewalks on Maple Drive, added a man.
- Put more police officers all over town, several others said.
- Others suggested building a community garden and a community center "to get our children off the street."

"Your action in the first meeting told us that we can do better," Roden told the audience. "We deserve better."

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