

Rossville residents address problems plaguing city, north Walker County

Josh O'Bryant, reporter | Posted: Thursday, March 3, 2016 10:58 am

Crime. Old buildings. Too little business.

These are the major obstacles facing Rossville and north Walker County, said those attending a gathering Tuesday night, March 1, at Mission Glen Baptist Church.

More than 100 people turned out for the “A Better Walker County” meeting, designed to launch — and drive — a conversation about what most plagues the area.

David Roden, a member of the county planning committee that hosted the gathering, spoke first.

“What the planning committee would like to see is a discussion tonight about how we can make Walker County the best it can be,” said Roden, who owns Mountain View Estates mobile home park on Wilson Road in Rossville. “It is just that simple. Nothing more, nothing less.”

The committee consists of Roden, sheriff Steve Wilson, Family Connection coordinator Susan Wells, schools superintendent Damon Raines, Ridgeland High School teacher Scott Harden, Ridgeland High resource officer Bruce Coker, and residents Jim Hill, Jon Hooper and Mike Cameron.

“We wanted the entire community to come and meet and be together, and we are going to identify the main problems that we as the residents of the north end of the county feel like that we need to address,” Roden said.

He asked those attending to write down “what you think (is) bringing our county down and then how we can work together to resolve that.”

Roden said he started his mobile home park about 28 years ago. At the time, he said, businesses were thriving and there was little crime.

But the north end of the county began to decline, he said. For example, residences and businesses that had burned down were allowed to remain, abandoned, with blue-tarped roofs. And dogs moved in, he



Addressing problems

Local residents and officials gathered to voice their concerns about the problems facing Rossville and north Walker County.

(Messenger photo/Josh O'Bryant)

mentioned, we came here 28 years ago and it wasn't the same place as it was today. So, something changed during that time. It's not one person's fault. It's not one group's fault. It's our fault. It's all our fault because we drive by these and we let it happen whether through elections, or whether in election, or whether just not wanting to get together and talk about it and that is the problem and it is all of our faults.

"I'm just tired of it. I'm tired of slumlords in our county who take advantage of people," Roden said. "I think we can do better."

Residents speak out

One resident suggested that everyone leave "the negativity at the door" and "get off their butt and do something instead of asking everyone else to do it."

"If we continue to turn away from God," the resident said, "our county is going to continue to go downhill. We better learn to fear God because that is the beginning of wisdom. We need him in this county to make a difference."

One resident pointed out that this is going to be an uphill battle, to which Roden agreed.

Another resident pointed out how full the meeting was and that the north end of the county is now interested in these discussions and they need a bigger facility to host future meetings due to the interest.

One woman said these problems are going to take time, as it is not an overnight fix, and people need to be patient and be positive. She said churches should get together and become involved.

One man said Rossville needs volunteers to come forward.

Another woman said her family moved here within the past year and there is potential for young professionals to move into the area.