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No answer yet to the smell plaguing Brunswick residents

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While a virtual town hall to discuss a recurring foul odor in the Brunswick area was informative, little headway has been made locally in finding the source, according to officials with the Brunswick branch of the state Environmental Protection Division.

The local EPD has held a few more meetings with other environmental agencies and business owners, said Environmental Specialist Brett Berry, but otherwise not much has changed since the town hall on Jan. 28.

“We haven’t slowed anything down, for sure,” Berry said. “We still have multiple staff looking into this.”



Strange smells are not new, Brunswick residents say, but since late 2020 more and more have reported smelling particularly foul odors that in some cases cause physical reactions. The stench catalyzed a marked increase in the number of air quality complaints to the EPD, which has cataloged and investigated them as they come in.

“The last few weeks the complaints have slowed down but have not stopped. I don’t know what the reason is, but we’re not getting as many,” Berry said.

The substance of the complaints has not changed, he said, and he assured residents the issue is still very much an open case. The Atlanta-based Air Quality Branch of the Department of Natural Resources is also involved, and Berry said the Brunswick office is looking to get more specialists involved.

“(The EPD is) really just continuing to do the same things we’ve been doing,” Berry said, which means investigating every report of an odor in the Brunswick area to the extent of their authority. “We’re certainly putting a lot of time and effort into continuing this investigation.”

Consistent air quality monitoring would be very helpful, he said, but the EPD does not have the funding to conduct such monitoring on an ongoing basis.

The Glynn Environmental Coalition is also on the case. At the town hall meeting, Executive Director Rachael Thompson said the organization is looking at options to acquire said funding. She could not be reached for comment by press time, however.

For the time being, Berry asked anyone who smells a strong odor they can’t explain to report it to the EPD. Email Berry at brett.berry@dnr.ga.gov or call 470-464-4675 with the location, time, wind direction, wind speed and temperature at the time the odor was noticed and a description of it.

Taylor Cooper