

Brief

to the United States Postal Service

in regards with mail and parcels delivery

issues within the

Springfield Subdivision

of the Town of Fort Mill, SC.

Presented on behalf of the Springfield residents

By:

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cc Representative Ralph Norman – South Carolina – 5<sup>th</sup> District

## **Springfield Neighborhood Background Information**

Springfield is a residential area within the Town of Fort Mill, SC located off Springfield Parkway. Its postal services are the responsibility of the USPS, Fort Mill main post office located on Tom Hall street.

Springfield is composed of approximately six hundred and fifteen (615) individual residences on approximately fifteen (15) miles of streets.

While Springfield might be considered a large subdivision, it has less homes and street miles than the Massey subdivision located off Dolbys Road, and the Baxter Village subdivision located off highway 160. Springfield will have less homes than Carolinas Orchards also located off Springfield Parkway when it is completed --all of these being served by the main Fort Mill post office.

Each residence of Springfield has an individual US Mail Approved mail box located at the curb of the street. Some residences (approximately 80) have dual (side by side) mail boxes.

The Springfield subdivision was opened in the fall of 2007 with its completion at about 98% of capacity 8 years later.

Springfield is not an age restricted subdivision like Carolinas Orchards. Therefore, our subdivision has residents of all age groups and the majority are composed of family with children. It has heavy traffic at peak hours, including many school buses and residents using the amenities center located at the community's main entrance, creating a regular traffic flow to and from this complex.

Prior to 2015, the Springfield subdivision was provided mail delivery services by one USPS carrier (Karen) who was doing an excellent job, with very few errors. Since her departure from the USPS, "temporary and/or contractor" personnel have been used with a very poor track record from any performance measure that one can imagine.

Because of poor delivery services and due to unanswered and unresolved issues previously communicated to Fort Mill's Postmaster and front desk personnel, the following actions were taken:

1. The USPS Manager, Consumer Affairs for Mid-Carolinas District was contacted as an "escalation step". This contact which was the result of two non-delivery issues (1 registered mail package and 1 Amazon package) resulted in apologies and a subsequent phone call from the Fort Mill post office manager. After offering apologies and indicating that Springfield was a large subdivision with a heavy load of mail / parcels he could not offer solutions to rectify the current delivery issues existing in Springfield.

A follow-up answer to the Manager, Consumer Affairs was sent explaining that the deliveries issues of the above two (2) packages were not the real problems that was discussed during the earlier phone conversation with her, instead other more fundamental issues exist, requiring the USPS and its Fort Mill main post office to make changes. (see attached document 1)

2. Informal conversations have taken place with many residents of Springfield to find out if they also had delivery issues with the USPS. Feedback is Unanimous - everyone has problems with the USPS.
3. A request for investigation and assistance was sent to our representative in Washington DC, Congressman Ralph Norman. (see attached document 2).
4. A request for input on the problems of mail and package delivery issues with the Fort Mill post office was sent to the residents of Springfield. To date over fifty (50) emails were accumulated to illustrate to seriousness of our complaints.
5. Following the request of assistance directed at our Congressman, the office of the Charlotte district Operation Manager contacted Pierre Langevin resident of Springfield who initiated this effort in order to attempt to organize a meeting between USPS representatives and representatives of Springfield. To this date, we are still waiting for a confirmation of this meeting.

## **The USPS Fort Mill main post office has serious issues to address.**

To illustrate some of these problems here is a sample of the many feedback received from the Springfield residents:

- Our mail is routinely delivered to neighbors and theirs to us.
- Hold mail for absences(vacations) not followed, mail still delivered or delivered to neighbors.
- Registered mail and packages not delivered while residents at home, instead card about registered mail/package left in mail box. On-line follow-up requesting to re-deliver not followed, mail and packages have to be retrieved “with difficulty” from post office.
- IRS refund check, tax documents, vehicle registration documents, credit cards, and other source of income paid by check and sent in the mail not delivered and/or lost.
- Invoice’s mail not delivered resulting in policy cancellations and late fees.
- Multitudes of contacts with Fort Mill post office personnel ignored and/or not followed through.
- Hit and run of mail carriers for damages to mail boxes and car. Follow-up by USPS on these issues very poor. Up to seven months to pay for damages.
- Flag out to pick-up mail not enforced, mail not picked-up for days.
- No feedback from Fort Mill post office on issues reported to them in writing.
- Inconsistent mail delivery time, up to 9:00pm
- Seen up to three (3) US mail vehicles on the same street at the same time each delivering one or two pieces of mail (including “junk mail”)
- Mail boxes stuffed, packages not delivered at the door.
- Mail sent but not delivered, still no idea where this mail went.

- Witnessed at Fort Mill post office lady requesting to speak to someone in authority about a legal issue. She was told no one was available to talk with her even if this was not during “lunch hour”.
- Hold Mail instructions not followed at all, mail missing or overflowing mail boxes or delivered to others and/or not held at post office as per requested.
- Mail forwarding instructions not followed, mail still delivered at “home address” or not forwarded at all. Must get at post office.
- People signing-up for “Informed delivery”, several pieces of mail identified by that tool but not being delivered, post office personnel do not know where the mail went or declare not to be familiar with that process.
- Mail pick-up lost and not delivered resulting in credit card cancellation.
- Cramming of packages in mail box, no delivery or throwing of larger packages (some of them with fragile content) on the front porch.
- Speeding of mail carriers in the neighborhood, making U-Turn in the middle of narrow street (Loretto Lane) instead of going around using the back alley.
- Fed Ex and UPS used to send important documents instead of USPS because of trust and reliability concerns.
- Mail returned to senders and stamped “undeliverable-no such address” while address of intended recipient in Springfield was correct all along.
- Package not delivered and marked as non-deliverable because could not access front door. As if delivering into an apartment complex. There was no obstruction preventing delivery to a single home residence.
- If mail box is partially obstructed by parked car, mail delivery will be skipped instead of stopping the mail truck and getting out to deliver mail in mail box.
- Inconsistent mail delivery, days without mail then it all comes at once.
- People being asked to call the carrier if they have mail delivery issue.
- We have lived in many states over the years and have always enjoyed reliable mail service – until we moved to Springfield in Fort Mill.
- Packages sitting at Post Office for many days when client paid for expedited delivery.

## **No need for one more apology.**

It is evident from the many feedbacks received (see Annex 1) that the USPS Fort Mill post office has serious challenges and opportunities for improvement in the following areas:

### **INTEGRITY**

For mail carriers to damage property and not stop to report the “incident” is in our opinion a “Hit & Run” which could be subject to prosecution. And for the US Post Office to show a lack of quick resolution to these damage claims leads the Springfield residents to question whether or not the USPS take them seriously.

### **PERSONNEL**

When we are told that we have a big neighborhood with a large mail volume, why is it that the previous mail carrier could handle the job admirably and no one else can? When we are told that the mail carrier route for Springfield has been posted for a long time and that no one wants to bid on it, so we ask “why”? Is there a severe difference of opinion between the management of the post office and its mail carrier/employee’s union? Why is it that Springfield has been served by temporary/contractor personnel for the last two years? Why is it that front desk personnel do not seem to care about our complaints?

### **TRAINING**

For Springfield residents to experience the same ongoing mistakes – which seem to be failures in following proper procedures and codes - appear to be symptoms of lack or poor training. For example, why is it that front desk personnel not know what to do about mail hold request not being fulfilled and/or not know about “Informed Delivery Service”?

## **QUALITY**

To consistently fail to deliver mail/and packages to its proper address is a reflection of the USPS lack of quality service. Where is all the mail that our residents are reporting missing?

## **OPERATIONS**

We understand that the smooth running of postal operations is complex, but we cannot comprehend why service has become increasingly problematic over such a long time, with no one taking ownership of the issues reported, let alone solving them. It seems to us that our local post office management is overwhelmed by the tasks at hand and that help is needed to apply lasting solutions. The township Fort Mill has been growing by leaps and bounds over the last five years or so and the USPS is not keeping-up with this new reality. Why after over two years is the USPS Fort Mill main post office still using temporary/contractor personnel for mail delivery in our neighborhood?

## **COMMUNICATION**

While it is evident that our local post office personnel lack proper communication skills to follow-up on issues the regional USPS management also share responsibilities to improve.

As an example, after having contacted the congressman's office to request assistance, the office of the regional operation manger got in touch with Mr. Langevin to offer apologies and indicate the sincerity of the USPS to find solutions to our problems.

A meeting was requested by USPS to hear our concerns. Dates were suggested by the USPS. Mr. Langevin told the USPS representative that he would like to be accompanied by a few other residents and would come back shortly with an answer to the proposed date and time.

Within an hour, Mr. Langevin called back and left a message that one of the proposed date (August 29) would work for the Springfield representatives and to call him back if there was a problem.

The following week the office of our congressman called Mr. Langevin to request the name of the USPS representatives who would be there. Mr. Langevin called back his contact at the Charlotte regional USPS office and left a message appropriately. After several days of not having heard from the USPS and while getting closer to the “tentative” meeting date Mr. Langevin informed the congressman’s office that he could not get the requested information, gave his contact phone number at the USPS and wish they had a better luck than he had.

The following day Mr. Langevin heard from the congressman’s office that the “tentative” meeting date had not been agreed to by the USPS, that Springfield’s issues were escalated higher in the USPS organization. He was also told that USPS was now considering having a larger meeting to include all of Fort Mill township.

After calling back his contact at USPS Mr. Langevin received confirmation of the above information about the changes being considered. After asking why she did not communicate this information directly to Mr. Langevin, she told him that she was instructed by her superiors NOT to contact Mr. Langevin.

Mr. Langevin understands that situations change, requiring an adjustment in plans. A different date and venue might be more effective but why not extend the person who originated a request of assistance the courtesy of a phone call? This situation can also be used as an example of failing to follow the normal and effective flow of business communication. Because USPS initially contacted Mr. Langevin, why would they not return his phone calls to confirm the next steps? In other words, why did Mr. Langevin need to learn from the congressman’s office about the change being contemplated by the USPS and not by the USPS directly?

This kind of experience is one reason why Springfield residents have lost trust and confidence in the USPS and why many have decided to use other facilities (Pineville, Rock Hill, The Postal Route, Fed Ex and UPS offices) to take care of their mailing business.



## CONCLUSIONS

As previously stated, the Springfield community is way beyond apologies and does not need to hear about how big their subdivision is and how large is the volume of mail and parcels delivered to them.

1. We need for the USPS to acknowledge that it has problems in each of the areas listed above.
2. We need for the USPS to work on action plans to implement lasting solutions to all of the issues identified in this brief.

We understand that fixing some problems will take time whereas, many can be addressed immediately. But we also believe that many of them can be addressed rapidly and easily in order to show an intent of seriousness at resolving our concerns and start showing quick improvements.

If the USPS wants to invoke a lack of resources (i.e. funding) to properly solve our issues, then we would suggest for them to work with our local Congressman's office and other appropriate elected officials to resolve this dilemma.

Many of us in Springfield have had work experience in Operations Management, Logistics, Human Resources, Communication and Training, where similar challenges arose and were solved.

We can certainly attest that throwing money at a problem is not always the proper answer. In most cases, assuming ownership and involving all the human resources at your disposal will result in quicker and longer lasting results.

Sincerely,

Pierre Langevin  
On behalf of the Springfield Residents.

September 5, 2017.