

Code Enforcement-Housing Code Board of Appeals
City of Cedar Rapids
Wednesday, January 6, 2016 @ 2:00pm-Five Seasons Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Amanda Burns, Sarah Coleman, Garry Grimm, Craig Stump, & Jim Thatcher

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Claudette Roby

Al Aosse-NOTE: Al Aosse had called a week ago stating he had just had back surgery so will be in physical therapy for the next 6-8 weeks

INSPECTORS PRESENT:

Coe Molumby

Dennis Seemann-(observing as a new nuisance abatement officer)

Councilman Scott Olson was not present

Hal Sondrol & Marie Davis were present

ALSO PRESENT:

John Riggs-Building Services Manager,

Housing Code Board of Appeals was called to order on Wednesday, September 16, 2015 at 2:00 pm in the Five Seasons Conference Room at the City Services Center located at 500 15th Avenue SW.

Sarah Coleman moved to accept the Wednesday, September 16, 2015, 2015 minutes as reviewed. Jim Thatcher seconded. All ayes, motion carried.

John Riggs re-appointed Shannon Day as secretary of the board.

Election of Chair and Vice-Chairperson-

Jim Thatcher moved to nominate Craig Stump remain as Chairperson. Seconded by Sarah Coleman. All ayes. Motion carried.

Garry Grimm moved to nominate Jim Thatcher remain as Vice-Chairperson. Seconded by Amanda Burns. All ayes. Motion carried.

H-1-2016-Hal Sondrol-322 Liberty Dr SE

Coe Molumby stated she performed an inspection on December 8, 2015 and determined there was enough damage to make the property unsafe for human occupancy as the ceiling plaster in several areas and electrical system had been compromised so she issued an

emergency notice of intent to placard and if corrections not made by December 17, 2015-the property would be placarded.

The notice of intent to placard was delivered to David McLish at the property on December 14, 2015. Mr Sondrol came into the office and filed a housing appeal on December 15, 2015 which held the order in abeyance until this meeting.

Garry Grimm asked for some history concerning this property and asked how does the city get into a property that was owner occupied. Coe Molumby stated she had originally entered the house back in 2010 and determined there were issues in the house even at that time as well as a no water complaint and a non-operating furnace in an occupied residence. Mr Sondrol had eventually received assistance from a past student who happened to work at the Water Department in getting the leak fixed and the water back on, however a permit for the roof was never obtained and work on the roof was not done in a workmanlike manner. After that time, conditions in the property worsened and several final notices were issued Coe had to file against the owner and take the case to court and have a judge make a decision and received contempt ruling. At this time, the city was entering to determine the current extent of damage.

Craig Stump asked if anyone was allowed into the house between 2010 and 2015.

Coe Molumby stated she was not allowed to go into the house for a re-inspection for the last 5 years and conditions just became worse from pictures she presented to the board.

John Riggs presented evidence that since the time Mr. Sondrol filed an appeal- several groups came forward to offer assistance. Since it's the desire of our department to bring the property into compliance. John Riggs entered in the record a copy of a letter offering assistance to Mr. Sondrol-see attached. Letter attached is a letter from First Lutheran Church offering a special "Good Samaritan Fund" of \$20,000 to assist with the required repairs. There is now ample support to complete the work. John Riggs recommends an time extension be given to Mr. Sondrol with the following stipulations:

1. All work shall be properly permitted prior to work being started
2. All inspections required by permits shall be completed as indicated on the permit
3. Any inspections deemed necessary by the plan reviewer during the permitting process shall be adhered to
4. Building Services recommends the time extension be approved until June 1, 2016 which coincides with the court ordered compliance date.

Sarah Coleman asked if water and furnace were currently on to which John Riggs replied both were currently on.

Amanda Burns asked if the entire roof was damaged or just a portion of the roof damaged. Coe Molumby stated all materials are currently damaged-most of the shingles have torn off and gravel has been removed and eroded and there is actually a new leak on the 2nd floor

rooms-where there was no damage is 2010-however eventually a tarp ended up on the roof to cover that damage on this house built in 1941.

Amanda Burns asked if there have been estimates to cover the cost of repairs in the past and asked if the \$20,000 will cover the entire amount of repairs. John Riggs added that there will also be a lot of volunteers involved with helping out the repairs in addition to the roof.

Hal Sondrol spoke and shared pictures of his family and family's history going back generations. He stated his grandfather was a master carpenter and stated he was humiliated that he cannot keep up with his property and hated the fact that he couldn't keep up with the repairs. Mr. Sondrol stated had two homeless roommates-David McLish and had kicked the other tenant out for stealing belongings. On the evening of December 29, 2015-Steven Knutson with First Lutheran came to his house and offered the help of \$20,000 and gave him the copy of the letter that John Riggs had presented. An anonymous donor is giving \$20,000 to help make repairs to the house-(see attachment). Mr. Sondrol stated he has two other properties, however no money on hand to make repairs. Mr. Sondrol plans to stay in the house at 322 Liberty Dr SE until he is 100 years old and is grateful for the generous donation. Mr. Sondrol did not feel it was fair that he was thrown into jail for not maintaining his property. Small claims court costs were higher because Jim Flitz made cases for each one of his three properties as they were different case numbers totaling \$465.00. Mr. Sondrol states he helped with his father's business when he was alive and assisted his parents until they passed away and appreciated being given the extra time.

Amanda Burns asked Mr. Sondrol if he was a landlord, however Mr. Sondrol advised that 322 Liberty Dr SE was his primary residence and the other two properties he owns- 1858 2nd Ave SE & 119 19th St SE are currently vacant. Mr. Sondrol stated he's thinking about renting or selling those properties as he cannot maintain them anymore as he purchased both of them when he was in his 30's.

Jim Thatcher moved to accept the proposal to grant an extension for repair time for 322 Liberty Dr SE until June 1, 2016. Seconded by Sarah Coleman. All ayes. Motion carried.

John Riggs introduced Dennis Seemann who is the department's newly hired nuisance abatement officer. John Riggs updated the board members on the upcoming vacant & neglected structure schedule that was approved by City Council on July 27, 2015. The new schedule pulls pieces of codes together and will implement them into an official tracking schedule. Notice of violation letters will be sent out to approximately thirty owners that currently fit the category of a vacant & neglected structure. These letters will be sent sometime after 2/1/2016. If the owners fix all the violations within 30 days-then the owner will not have to register the property as a vacant & neglected structure. If they are not in compliance after the 30 days has passed-they will need to register the property at \$250/unit and submit a plan of action-which is reasonable as St Paul for example charges \$1,200.00 for vacant & neglected structures. The vacant & neglected structure code could apply to commercial properties as well.

Sarah Coleman moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Amanda Burns. All ayes.
Motion accepted.

Meeting adjourned 2:50 pm.
Recording Administrative Assistant, Shannon Day