

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY

BOARD MEMBERS

Milton Reed, President
Richard Trembczynski, Vice President
Thomas Davis, Member

Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 26, 2020 @ 5:30 p.m.

Reported for Fissinger & Associates
By: Lisa Pena

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL: Present: Milton Reed, Richard Trembczynski,
Thomas Davis.

MINUTES: Regular Meeting August 12, 2020

Motion to approve August 12, 2020 Meeting Minutes made by
Richard Trembczynski. Second by Thomas Davis.

Questions/Comments: None.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

MR. REED: New Business from the Health Department the
Swearing in of Animal Control Warden Marlon Woods.

Marlon, can you please come forward? And how about
we do this together. Tracey Ailes, is she here as well?
Tracey, please come forward.

Thank you all for coming. First of all for the
Board I would like to take a motion to approve the Health
Department's request to swear in Animal Control Warden Marlon
Woods and Health Code Enforcement Officer Tracey Ailes.

1 Motion to approve the Swearing in of Animal Control Warden
2 Marlon Woods and Health Code Enforcement Officer Tracey Ailes
made by Thomas Davis. Second by Richard Trembczynski.

3 Questions/Comments: None.

4 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
5 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

6 (Whereupon Marlon Woods was Sworn in as Animal
7 Control Warden and Tracey Ailes was Sworn in as
8 Health Code Enforcement Officer.)

9 MR. REED: Congratulations. I know we're going to need
10 some multiple signatures, Tracey and Marlon. So we'll get
11 all that squared away and get you copies of your oath too
12 because I only have one copy of each.

13 You have everything over there? Good.

14 Moving on to the Building Department --

15 MR. SMITH: Mr. President, there is a Resolution 2020-21
16 prior to that.

17 MR. REED: I'm sorry. Yes. Is there a motion to
18 approve Resolution 20-21, 3931 McCook Avenue and Release of
19 Lien?

20 Motion to approve Resolution 2020-21 3931 McCook and Release
21 of Lien made by Richard Trembczynski. Second by Thomas
22 Davis.

23 Questions/Comments: None.

24 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
25 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

MR. REED: Now we will turn it over to the Building
Department and Attorney Smith.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. President. Good evening to
the Board. We do have a matter of several new demolitions as
well as I believe five status properties.

There are persons present here for certain
properties. I assume, Mr. President, you want to take those
first and in order.

1 MR. REED: Absolutely.

2 MR. SMITH: If I can first approach and hand you per
3 your request a binder with photographs. These are in
4 alphabetical order. There's a pink piece of paper with the
5 address on each for your review.

6 MR. REED: Thank you.

7 MR. SMITH: And the Board's review.

8 MR. REED: Thank you both for preparing this for us.

9 MR. SMITH: Of course. The first matter in which a
10 person is present here for the hearing is 4802 Alexander.
11 The owner is listed as Richard and Arthur Pollard. However
12 Miss Shymane Robinson was the tax sale person served.

13 I have been in contact with her attorney, Mr. Mike
14 Kavascoff (phonetic), and explained to him the Building
15 Commissioner's position is to request that the Demolition
16 Order be affirmed based upon the condition of the property.

17 As you can see there is a two-story structure with
18 part of the first floor boarded up. There was a collapsed
19 staircase at the time the photos were taken.

20 Miss Robinson has indicated that has been
21 corrected.

22 You can see that the brick is deteriorated on the
23 west side of the building.

24 I have explained to Miss Robinson that even though
25 the request will be made to enter the Order as presented that
she will have an opportunity to meet and she has met with
Mr. Portalatin. And the intention is to enter a Rehab
Agreement.

It's just that obviously with the Redemption Period
ending in September she probably won't have a deed until the
end of the year.

So our request is to enter the Order. I believe
Miss Robinson would like to be heard.

MR. REED: Mrs. Robinson, can you please state your name
and your address?

1 MS. ROBINSON: Yes. My name is Shymane Robinson,
2 Illinois attorney. Address is 2518 Cedar Glenn Drive,
3 Lynwood, Illinois.

4 MR. REED: And what would you like to say?

5 MS. ROBINSON: Yes. I would like for the motion to be
6 withdrawn for the demolition. The current owner would have
7 18 days for redemption. We are prepared to make any rehabs
8 that they're requesting.

9 They did cite pictures or provide pictures to you
10 today with 18 windows boarded up. Those windows are behind
11 the boards. And the boards were put up to protect the
12 windows. I am not sure if they peeked behind the boards or
13 not.

14 Just so the record is clear I did see the picture
15 that they showed with part of the porch coming down. I
16 referenced that with the picture that I do have present. And
17 they are actually correct. That part of the porch is down.

18 Other than that the repairs that they're citing
19 does not rise to the standard of demolition. I spoke with --
20 forgive me. I don't recall his name. But I spoke with the
21 Inspector. He inspected the inside of this home. And the
22 inside of this home is livable. And someone once lived
23 inside of this home as well.

24 I will request for the motion to be rescinded.

25 MR. SMITH: Mr. Portalatin can testify as to the
condition of the home. Although I would mention that the
position of the Building Commissioner is also that although
Miss Robinson is a tax sale purchaser she really doesn't have
any ownership in the property at this point.

We notified her as we always do because she's a tax
sale purchaser. We're willing to work with her. And our
plan is to work with her.

However as you know, Mr. President, to keep the
process moving forward it's important for the Building
Commissioner to have an Order entered so he can continue on
the process.

Otherwise if Miss Robinson determines not to file
the verified position in October, if something happens where
she decides not to pursue the deed we're back at the reset

1 button. And that's what we try to avoid to keep things
2 moving.

3 MR. REED: Let Mr. Portalatin and I'll let you come
4 back.

5 MS. ROBINSON: Absolutely.

6 MR. REED: What he says may affect what you want to say.

7 MR. PORTALATIN: James Portalatin, East Chicago Building
8 Commissioner. I did speak to Mrs. Robinson. I did speak to
9 her and I did explain to her the condition of the exterior
10 which you see with the bricks and with various items that do
11 need to be repaired and are in dilapidated condition.

12 As far as the interior we did do a walkthrough in
13 the interior. And I told her it's not as bad. But it's not
14 livable whatsoever. There is some water damage from the roof
15 coming. So the ceiling has collapsed. Typical in a vacant
16 property.

17 So to say that it's livable, it's not livable at
18 this point. There needs to be still repairs that need to be
19 done. But it's not the worse conditions that I have seen in
20 an interior. It definitely can be rehabbed.

21 MR. REED: Would you have another comment?

22 MS. ROBINSON: Yes. I was not privy to that entire
23 conversation. So I did not have that. I just want the
24 record to reflect I did not have that full conversation with
25 him.

It was limited to have you done a done walkthrough.
Yes. It is livable. But that's okay. Whatever repairs is
needed we're prepared to do.

Respectfully I do disagree with counsel's position
in terms of us not having standing. We do have an equitable
interest in the property.

In addition to that the tax sale laws we can
request a Point of Order to make the repairs as needed to
protect our equitable interest in this property. And we're
prepared to do that as well if needed.

With us being so close to the time that's required
for us to actually file for the deed -- the redemption period

1 is 15 days. After that we are filing a deed. At that point
2 they would not be able to redeem. It will go through the
3 court process.

4 We should have the deed by November-ish is my
5 projection.

6 I don't think this property rises to a level of
7 demolition at this time. So I respectfully ask for it to be
8 withdrawn.

9 MR. REED: Well, let me perhaps shed some light as to --
10 I don't know if you're 100 percent familiar with what a
11 Demolition Order actually means in the City of East Chicago.

12 That is not an automatic that this building is
13 coming down for demolition. But what it does do is it starts
14 what I would call a time clock if you will to say, hey,
15 there's not going to be a demolition set, there's not a date
16 set, there's not a bid going out.

17 But it gives you the time to go into his office
18 show in earnest that you have a legitimate and genuine
19 interest in rehabbing the property, show evidence of some
20 type of work. It seems like there may have been some
21 already.

22 And when you go through all those processes and
23 even before it even comes to demotion you will have a chance
24 to even come back before this Board and say, hey, you know
25 what, this is what we've done.

Even there have been cases where they say, hey, you
know what, we got hung up because of Covid and this is what
happened and ask for a little bit more time.

So this is not the end of the game. This is the
start of the game. So I would say don't let a Demolition
Order make you nervous at all.

From what I can tell your intent is to repair. We
have a collective goal --

MS. ROBINSON: Yes.

MR. REED: -- to have it rehabbed. It's not our goal to
go and tear it down. But this just stops it from, you know,
six months down the road and nothing has happened and we
don't have to start at day one.

1 So you will have ample opportunity to work with his
2 office. And if everything that you say you're going to do
3 and you're prepared to do you do, you will have no problem
4 from this particular Board.

5 MS. ROBINSON: Awesome. My only concern would be the
6 amount of fees that would be incurred. I am not sure. I do
7 have an Indiana attorney because I don't practice in Indiana.
8 But if there's going to be fees that's incurred for, you
9 know, the process that they're going through, I would request
10 for us to extend this hearing out then to give us an
11 opportunity, you know, to rectify this.

12 MR. REED: Again it's a little different over here.
13 Maybe, Kevin, you want to speak to that.

14 MR. SMITH: I was just going to say there really aren't
15 any fees. We just go out to bid eventually. And that would
16 have to be when James indicates that he wants to go out to
17 bid.

18 Many properties as you know the Demolition Order
19 stays in for up to two years. Sometimes they go back to bid.
20 Sometimes they don't.

21 If he believes there's going to be a Rehab
22 Agreement, usually he doesn't even send it out to bid.

23 But there's really no cost incurred in that. I
24 mean there's some publication costs. But we don't generally
25 go after the owner for that. So there's really no fees or
costs involved.

 MR. REED: The biggest thing that you have to work out
with him get more familiar with East Chicago and Indiana.
But all of your contractors have to be licensed.

 MS. ROBINSON: Absolutely.

 MR. REED: I urge you not to send a contractor out there
to do any work that hasn't come through his office with the
proper approvals. But if you do that and do what you say
you're going to do, I believe you'll be absolutely fine.

 I'll just restate that our goal is to get this
place rehabbed, back in shape. That you bought and want to
do something with it is 100 percent fine. We're in agreement
with that.

1 Does that provide some clarity?

2 MS. ROBINSON: It does. And then my final statement I
3 would just say while I'm in front of you guys if there's no
4 cost, you know, to this process or minimal cost to this
5 process in addition a Demolition Order can be entered, you
6 know, upwards of, you know, a couple months to two years, I
7 guess for me is like the rush. Right?

8 We don't have to enter in a decision today. And it
9 could be given -- you know, we could provide an extension
10 until after we receive the deed. And we're agreeing to
11 comply.

12 MR. REED: Well, I can explain to you the rush. The
13 rush is because this neighborhood does not deserve to have
14 this type of property sitting there. The residents that live
15 in this neighborhood do not want this on their block and in
16 their community.

17 So there is an extreme sense of urgency for all of
18 the repairs throughout the City, not only this one.

19 So our policy in the City of East Chicago as far as
20 this Board we don't kick it down the road and delay. We have
21 a sense of urgency to revitalize and clean up our
22 neighborhoods.

23 So that is the reason for the rush. The residents
24 deserve better.

25 MS. ROBINSON: And they do and we intend to provide
26 better. And we're looking forward to do the repairs for this
27 property. I just want to make sure that I don't become owner
28 or take ownership of a property that's demoed.

29 MR. REED: I think we have explained. And absolutely
30 we're on the same page. I appreciate you coming out today.

31 MS. ROBINSON: Awesome. Thank you so much.

32 MR. REED: And I'm smiling behind my mask. It's good to
33 have you here.

34 MS. ROBINSON: Thank you.

35 MR. REED: Can we get the next one?

MR. SMITH: Yes. Next one would be Mr. Brooks who is

1 present here for 5008 Alexander and also 4716 McCook Avenue,
2 front and rear. The Brooks Family Trust is the owner.

3 MR. PORTALATIN: He left.

4 MR. SMITH: He is looking for some time to enter into a
5 Rehab Agreement. And we would request that the Order be
6 entered and affirmed as presented based upon the condition of
7 the property which you have in the photographs and in the
8 request for the Order.

9 And of course that would be stayed pending the
10 Rehab Agreement pursuant to the Building Commissioner's
11 request.

12 MR. REED: Thank you.

13 MR. SMITH: Next matter I believe is Miss Chastity
14 Hughes who is here present for 4751 Melville, front and
15 garage.

16 Miss Hughes is I believe a member of Rose is for
17 Woody Investments, LLC. And she also discussed this matter
18 with Mr. Portalatin. They're going to enter into a Rehab
19 Agreement I believe.

20 But in the meantime we would request the Demolition
21 Order be entered as presented.

22 MR. REED: Would you like to speak, ma'am?

23 MS. HUGHES: No. It's okay. I spoke with him.

24 MR. REED: Thank you. Thank you for coming out. We can
25 proceed down the list.

MR. SMITH: The other property in which someone was here
earlier is 4816 McCook. Miss Johnnie Burts was here. And
she is in the process I believe of beginning the
rehabilitation of the property.

In fact they were issued permits last week to do
some siding work. And they're about to start painting.

So this is another one where it is our intention
and our request to enter the Order as presented. However it
would be stayed pending the continued rehabilitation of the
property. And then we would set this over for status for
10/28.

1 And that by the way would also go for the other
2 properties. Miss Hughes' property at 4751 Melville, 4716
3 McCook, Brooks, and 5008 Alexander also Mr. Brooks and then
4 4802 Alexander with Miss Robinson, we would request they be
5 entered and set over for status for October 28.

6 The remaining properties, Mr. President, 4726
7 Alexander, that property is owned by Mr. Tommy Phillips, Jr.
8 The owner has requested of Mr. Portalatin to enter into a
9 Rehab Agreement.

10 So we would request the Order be entered and set
11 over for status on 10/28.

12 4804 Alexander pictures were presented. Owned by
13 Mr. Bruce. It's a boarded up building. We would request
14 that the Order be entered and affirmed as presented. We do
15 have good service. No one appears.

16 4823 Alexander, the owner is listed Arga Mendel
17 (phonetic) via quitclaim deed in January of 2020. The
18 windows appear open on the second floor. The brick is
19 unsound pursuant to the Inspector's review and the photos as
20 presented.

21 We would ask that Order be affirmed. No one
22 appears here today.

23 Next on the list is 5013 Alexander, front and
24 garage. This is a property, Mr. President and Board, the
25 last deed is from 1972 to the Dix Family. It is a one-story
structure. The front is boarded up.

Interestingly enough the taxes are paid up.
There's a Homestead Exemption on the property. But it is
vacant.

We would request that the Demolition Order be
affirmed as presented based upon the condition of the
property. No one appears.

MR. REED: This is 5013?

MR. SMITH: Yes, sir.

MR. REED: Is this the garage only?

MR. SMITH: Front and garage.

1 MR. REED: Please proceed.

2 MR. SMITH: 4138 Magoun is the next property. The owner
3 is listed as the Chudick Family. It was sold on tax sale to
4 a company out of Connecticut.

5 The property is boarded up and vacant. And the
6 garage as you can see is in absolute terrible condition.

7 We would request that the Order for Demolition be
8 affirmed as presented.

9 That concludes the New Demolitions, Mr. President.
10 So we would request the relief requested by the Building
11 Commissioner.

12 MR. REED: Okay. Do you want to carry it with the other
13 ones?

14 MR. SMITH: Yes. Mr. President, on the Status
15 Properties it's the same Report and it's a good Report on all
16 five listed. That would include 3806 Catalpa, 3808 Catalpa,
17 3927 Deodar, front, 3618 Hemlock, rear, and 4750 Melville,
18 front.

19 I am happy to report that the properties are
20 continued to be rehabbed. Work is in progress. And things
21 are moving down the right track.

22 So we're hoping by the October 28 date, the status
23 date, we can report that progress has been made and
24 Mr. Portalatin can let the Board know that they're coming off
25 the Demolition List for compliance.

MR. REED: Thank you for your report.

MR. SMITH: Thank you.

MR. REED: Is there a motion to approve the
recommendation of the Building Department for the New
Demolitions List on our agenda?

Motion to approve Building Department Demolitions List
Recommendation made by Richard Trembczynski. Second by
Thomas Davis.

Questions/Comments: None.

1 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

2
3 MR. REED: Is there a motion to accept the Updated
Status Report for the properties listed our agenda?

4 Motion to approve Building Department Updated Status Report
made by Thomas Davis. Second by Richard Trembczynski.

5 Questions/Comments: None.

6 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
7 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

8 OTHER/AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: None.

9 * Next Regular Meeting Date: Wednesday, September
10 9, 2020 @ 5:30 p.m.

11 Motion to adjourn made by Richard Trembczynski. Second by
Thomas Davis.

12 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
13 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

14 * Meeting ended at 5:54 p.m.

1 Approval of the Meeting Minutes of
2 Wednesday, August 26, 2020

3 Approved and Signed _____

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5 _____
6 Milton Reed, President

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8 _____
9 Richard Trembczynski, Vice President

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11 _____
12 Thomas Davis, Member

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14 _____
15 Olga Cosme, Board Secretary

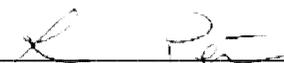
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Lisa Pena, a competent and duly qualified court reporter, do hereby certify that I did report in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings and that my shorthand notes so taken at said time and place were thereafter reduced to typewriting under my personal direction.

I further certify that the foregoing typewritten transcript constitutes minutes of said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Portage, Indiana, this 7th day of September, 2020.



Lisa Pena
Notary Public Porter County
Certified Shorthand Reporter
License Number 084-003483

