

Building Appeal Board
Wednesday, January 8, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Hinzmann; Justin Hoffmann; Bill Scalzo; Don O'Connor; Fire Chief Shawn Krizaj; Building Official Blake Nelson

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Amanda Mangan; Steven Robertson; Bonnie Engseth

1. ROLL CALL

2. Motion made by Board Member Krizaj, seconded by Board Member Hoffmann, to approve the October 9, 2024 minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

3. OLD BUSINESS

An Appeal to Reverse a Condemnation for Demolition Order of the Building Official for 123 S Blackman Avenue, brought by appellant LaSheenlaruba Tyacke.

Record of appeal consists of: Appeal Letter with attachments, City Staff report, and statements made at the hearing

- a. Blake Nelson, Building Official stated that there had been no communication from the appellant until January 7, 2025, when Bonnie Engseth received an email stating that she was ill and would not be at the meeting. Bonnie Engseth responded that the meeting would still take place, and she could either send a representative on her behalf or email the required documents. There was no response from the appellant prior to the meeting.
- b. A discussion was held between the Board and staff regarding the safety of the building and what happens to properties that are condemned for demolition. Board Member Krizaj stated that vacant buildings in disrepair attract less than desirable activity. Blake Nelson stated that the building is boarded up and has a do not enter sign.
- c. Krizaj asked Nelson about a restoration agreement and/or demolition. Nelson stated the city has limited funds for demolition, so these properties are not demolished in a timely manner. The demo status would stay regardless of ownership, but the order can be rescinded if the required criteria are met. Because the city has limited funds, these properties are not demolished in a timely manner.
- d. Board Member Hinzmann asked about the taxes on the property. Board Member O'Connor stated that the taxes are in arrears. If the Board decides to give the appellant an extension, the paying of the delinquent taxes should be a condition.
- e. Board Member O'Connor stated that the appellant has not performed what she was required to do and recommended denial of the appeal.

Motion made by Board Member O'Connor, seconded by Board Member Scalzo, to deny the appeal and adopt the findings of fact, specifically that:

- A. Appellant failed to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of the stay granted on October 9, 2024;
- B. The structure was damaged by a fire in August of 2024 to an extent that meets the criteria for a demolition order under Section 10-3(a) of the Duluth City Code;
- C. The Building Official's Demolition Order is supported by and was not issued in error.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Board Member Hoffmann, seconded by Board Member Krizaj, to adjourn at 3:12 p.m.
Motion passed unanimously.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Blake Nelson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

BLAKE NELSON, SECRETARY
BUILDING APPEAL BOARD