

James A. Szevich
454 Smith Ave. N.
St. Paul, MN 55102-2726

April 5, 2021

City of St. Paul
Office of the City Council
310 City Hall
15 West Kellogg Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55102-1615

Atten: Marcia Moermond, Legislative Hearing Officer

**Timeline and Work Plan for Completing the Required Repairs
to 454 Smith Avenue N., St. Paul, Minnesota**

Background:

As we discussed in the March 23, 2021 Legislative Hearing, I clearly understood the imposed deadline of last July 1, 2020 for making the necessary repairs to my home at 454 N. Smith Avenue. I spent several months trying to find a reputable contractor who could complete the required work on my home, which was built in 1854. (It is the seventh oldest structure of any kind in the entire city of St. Paul, and was first inventoried as an historic structure during the WPA program of the 1930s.) Over a period of weeks, several contractors came out, looked at the roof and what it involved in the way of metal flashing, soffit and fascia repair, etc., and told me they had no interest in the project, and did not want to work with a combination of new and historic existing materials. Several other contractors made appointments with me, but never showed up. Finally, in February 2020, I found a highly recommended contractor who agreed to do the work, and for a reasonable price, and had no hesitancy to work with historic materials. I toured a St. Paul property that he had recently completed work on, and talked to that homeowner as far as his satisfaction with the performance of the contractor. I signed a contract with the contractor to complete the necessary work on my house, and have it finished by July 1, 2020.

Simultaneously, while pursuing a reputable contractor, I was also busy laying out a work plan that would create enough income for me to be able to pay for the necessary repairs. What I devised was a series of historical lectures at Waldmann Brewery, directly opposite my home on Smith Avenue. The lecture series was scheduled to run from early February through the end of June. In April 2020, I also planned to commence a series of historical tours of various neighborhoods and sites throughout the metro area. The tour series would extend well into November 2020, weather permitting. From my past experience, I knew this work plan, a combination of historical lectures and tours would be sufficient to provide at least \$13,000 in income, which I would need to pay for the required repairs.

My work plan was put into effect, and my lectures in February 2020 were filled to capacity. I earned \$2,000 in income that month that was designated for repairs to my house. (That money was used later to make a property tax payment.) At the beginning of March, I visited my doctor and I discussed my work with the lecture series, and got a lecture from him in return. He told me that the Covid 19 virus was already in Minnesota, and the only reason the public didn't understand that it was here, was because they were not testing like they should be. He told me that if I continued meeting in a small room with 24 strangers at a time, that it would be suicide. He asked me to stop all of my lectures immediately to protect my health, which he said was already compromised because of my ongoing seizures, caused by my strokes in 2017 and 2018.

I ended my lecture series immediately, and decided not to pursue my planned tour program which was supposed to commence in April 2020. So, from the first week of March 2020, until the present day, I have had no way to earn any additional income. **(See attached email message to Tom Schroeder, informing him I had to end my lecture series in March 2020.)**

My current total annual income is approximately \$13,000, which is provided by a monthly Social Security payment, and a monthly Veteran's pension. I have no savings, as they were completely exhausted while caring for my mother for more than fourteen years during the last years of her life. She first fought a courageous battle with a stage four cancer diagnosis, followed by a series of strokes, which left her completely paralyzed below the neck, without any verbal speech, and the need to have all food and liquids through the feeding tube.

My life is simple, and because I have never driven or owned an automobile, don't own a television, and have no real need for a formal wardrobe, I can live on \$13,000 per year. Unfortunately, my "emergency funds" were exhausted during the fourteen or so years described above. Everyone of those years were a blessing to me, and I was happy to be there for my mother when she needed me the most, and I could provide some quality of life for her, when she was so completely incapacitated. I would do it all over again tomorrow, if I had the chance. My mother died in August 2011, just shy of her 86th birthday.

Current Plans for 2021

Plan A

I have received my first dose of the Covid vaccine, and will get my second dose on April 21, 2021. In early May 2021, I will start a series of historical tours that I had planned for last year. If personal and public safety permits regarding Covid, I will resume my lecture series, hopefully by this fall. I am trying to stay well-informed on how the new variant strains of the virus are affecting the public infection rates. I will do my best to earn as much money as possible to put towards the repairs on my house, which are currently estimated to be approximately \$15,000, including labor and materials.

Plan B

I have started the application process to obtain a low-interest home improvement loan through the NeighborWorks Home Partners program, and will be completing the 21 page application this week. If approved, I may be able to obtain all of the necessary funds to complete the required work on my house. Marie Malrick who works with the program told me that I could use her name, and phone number 651-348-5083, if you would like to verify my intention to pursue this source of funding.

Plan A and Plan B will be pursued simultaneously during the next several months.

I have contacted my contractor, and discussed my situation with him. He has offered to work with me, and take payments over a period of months in order to complete the work on the house. If that is necessary, we will work out an agreement satisfactory for both of us.

Timeline for Required Repairs

1. May 1, 2021 – Repairs to concrete stairs to public walk will be complete.
2. Aug 1, 2021 – New roof decking and protective water-proof covering will be installed.
3. Sep. 1, 2021 – All exterior wooden surfaces cited in repair orders will be repaired and painted.
4. Oct. 1, 2021 – New roof will completed and new soffit and fascia repairs completed. (The reason for the later date is because of the contractor having ten roofing jobs already on his calendar for this year.)

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Hoping this new plan and schedule for 2021 meets with your approval.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have during the hearing tomorrow afternoon. I will be at my phone from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. to speak with you.

Thank you for your time and patience with me in this matter.

All the very best,

Jim Sazevich

Email: jimsazevich@yahoo.com

COPY FOR HEARING OFFICER – RE : 454 N. SMITH AVE.

Re: Pint of History - Program Plans

Mar 2, 2020 at 10:10 PM

PrintRaw message

Tom Schroeder <tom@waldmannbrewery.com>

To: Jim Sazevich <jimsazevich@yahoo.com>

Cc: Jessa Felkins <jessa@waldmannbrewery.com>,

Mark van Wie <mark@waldmannbrewery.com>

Thanks for the note Jim, we totally understand and would want you to follow your doctor's recommendations and do what's best for your health. The Pint of History's you did this year—as well as last year—have all been hugely successful and well received, and we're so grateful for the opportunity to provide the forum for your life's work. April or whenever you're ready for more will be fine, and I'm sure the next batch will be as popular as the last. In the meantime I'll be meeting with Paul Maccabee next week and who knows, maybe there'll be a few more sessions this spring in addition to yours! All the best, Tom

On Mon, Mar 2, 2020 at 9:59 PM Jim Sazevich <jimsazevich@yahoo.com> wrote:

Hi Tom, Mark, and Jessa,

I saw my doctor today, and have decided to take a break from programs at Waldmann until at least the first week of April, and possibly even later.

Because of my current more frequent seizures, my over-all health is currently somewhat compromised, and was told that I should avoid crowds where there could be sick people present, either with the second flu wave of the season, and the possibility of the Corona virus. The doctors believe that as soon as more people are tested, they will find that the virus has been alive and flourishing in Minnesota, even if it doesn't appear to be presently because of the lack of testing.

My doctor also wants to do some additional diagnostic testing because of the increase in the intensity and frequency of my seizures, so I will be running back and forth to clinics during the rest of March, and likely into April.

I am sorry for this short notice, as I was planning and looking forward to presenting some new programs during the coming weeks.

We all should learn more about the spread of the new flu strain and also the Corona virus within the next few weeks, and can decide if it is safe to gather in close spaces as things develop. If things look good on that front, and I have completed my diagnostic tests by early April, I would really like to resume Pint of History programs - if it meets with Waldmann's schedule.

Thank you all for your help making my first six programs of this year a huge success. I look forward to working with all of you again soon. I plan being around Waldmann on and off during the month, and am especially looking forward to celebrating my 70th birthday with my family at Waldmann on Sunday the 22nd.

All the very best,

Jim

On Wednesday, February 26, 2020, 09:14:43 AM CST, Tom Schroeder <tom@waldmannbrewery.com> wrote:

Hi Jim, good to know. Sounds like the right decision, and it'll be good for you to rest up a week also! When you get the title and description for your next presentation please forward to Adam and we'll get it rolling! Copying Mark and Jessa so they know we're taking a week off from Pint of History, returning the following Sun Mon & Wed (if you're still willing Jim). Thanks

Tom Schroeder, Proprietor

www.WaldmannBrewery.com

On Wed, Feb 26, 2020 at 9:04 AM Jim Sazevich <jimsazevich@yahoo.com> wrote:

Good morning Tom,

Thank you for your message regarding today's program, and taking the time to set up for me.

And, thank you again for inviting me to do these Pint of History programs, as the income is much needed and I really enjoy doing them.

I talked to Chris Keith, and he will not be doing any programs next week. His anxiety is riding high this month, and he simply doesn't want any additional stress right now.

I'll let you know what I decide about my birthday plans by next week.

Have fun at the cabin!!

All the best,

Jim

On Wednesday, February 26, 2020, 07:53:18 AM CST, Tom Schroeder
<tom@waldmannbrewery.com> wrote:

Hi Jim, I'm afraid I won't be able to make today's presentation again--I'm picking up a friend at the airport landing at noon and then a group of us are headed up to our cabin for the long weekend. But I'll have everything set up for you as before. Best, Tom

Tom Schroeder, Proprietor

www.WaldmannBrewery.com

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