

From: "Ubl, Stephen (CI-StPaul)" <stephen.ubl@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Date: August 19, 2013, 9:30:18 AM CDT
To: "Cervantes, Ricardo (CI-StPaul)" <ricardo.cervantes@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: "Karpen, Brian (CI-StPaul)" <brian.karpen@ci.stpaul.mn.us>, "Schroeder, Greg (CI-StPaul)" <greg.schroeder@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: 676 Wells
Ricardo,

I am responding to an email from Brian Karpen regarding the retaining walls at 676 Wells. This property is a Vacant Building II with a Team Inspection report that was generated in part by my observations. The retaining walls were reviewed by me during the Team Inspection with notes indicating that the walls needed to be reviewed by an engineer because of their design, deterioration and failing status. Brian's observations appear to support my opinion with regards to the various walls on the property as well as the retaining walls adjacent to 676 Wells.

Safety is very important especially due to the fact that we have multiple properties along public property that is both a park and a trail. The public is exposed to these walls which show no signs of standard construction practices. The various walls on this property and in the surrounding area have different heights, materials and designs. Retaining walls over four feet in height require a permit (we have no records indicating any permit was obtained for retaining wall construction) First, typically an engineered design would need to be submitted indicating what type of materials are to be used and what type of soils are on the site to support the footings or wall design as well as what soils are to be used as backfill behind the walls. As Brian indicated in his letter, soils used for backfill are critical for drainage in order to reduce the excessive loads placed on the walls that would cause wall movement and failure. Some of the walls show signs of no footings or stable soils as a base as indicated by the irregular changes in wall height elevations. Additionally, I do not see any screening on the back side of the walls to contain soils to prevent erosion of soils through the various wall materials used to build the walls. Third, dissimilar materials are typically not used for the wall materials because they cannot be connected in a fashion that would support the soils and frost loads placed on the walls.

The walls show signs of movement, failure and hazardous conditions. We cannot anticipate what/when any of these walls may fall and jeopardize the public safety. The installation of the various wall materials used show no signs of standard construction practices being incorporated and in my opinion are not stable. Brian and I have asked for an engineer to review the walls but to date have not received any report. Because of this inaction, the removal of these walls should take place prior to winter in order to minimize any liability to the public and prevent any potential major incident from occurring.

Thank you,

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