

Moermond, Marcia (CI-StPaul)

From: Magner, Steve (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Monday, July 23, 2018 7:14 AM
To: Moermond, Marcia (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Vang, Mai (CI-StPaul)
Subject: FW: Concerned Citizens of Desnoyer Park

FYI



Steve Magner

Code Enforcement Manager

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From: Tracy Young [mailto:trixie_curler@yahoo.com]
Sent: Friday, July 20, 2018 4:11 PM
To: Magner, Steve (CI-StPaul) <steve.magner@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward4 <Ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
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Subject: Concerned Citizens of Desnoyer Park

To: Steve Magner, Manager of Code Enforcement, City of St. Paul and Samantha Henningson, Ward 4 Councilmember
cc Mayor Melvin Carter, Desnoyer Park Improvement Association, and concerned neighbors of Desnoyer Park

Dear Mr. Magner and Ms. Henningson,

We're writing on behalf of a group of about 20 property owners and taxpayers here in Desnoyer Park neighborhood, regarding multiple problems with properties associated with an absentee landlord, Jay Olson of Forest Lake. Our small group has met several times in the past year to communicate our concerns and work together and with the city of St Paul, in order to deal with the many issues related to his numerous rundown rental properties. Former Councilmember Russ Stark helped us when we first got organized last year, and now we call upon you, Councilmember Henningson, to hear us and help us.

We understand that one of Mr. Olson's properties is slated to come before a legislative hearing officer on July 31, and most of us plan on attending to air our concerns. Thank you, Councilmember Henningson, for getting this on the agenda. However in preparing our statements we have realized there is much we don't know about what's going on with Mr. Olson's property that we would like you to help us with. Can you please answer the questions below?

Regarding Legislative Hearings: We understand the purpose of the legislative hearing is to afford the property owner due process before the city takes action on a property. A number of us have attended previous hearings on an Olson property where Jay Olson was not present. Questions: Who has the right to speak on behalf or in defense of the property in

question, if not the property owner? What legal status or relationship to Jay Olson does Jeff Chermak have that allows him to speak on behalf of the property in question (521/523 Desnoyer Ave.) when Mr. Olson is not in attendance? Is Mr. Olson himself not obligated to be there to speak for himself and his property?

Regarding the double bungalows having been declared vacant: Could you help us understand how vacancy is determined when one side of a bungalow or duplex is declared uninhabitable and is vacant (sometimes for years) while the other side is inhabited?

Regarding taxes: The Olson properties number twenty-one in the Desnoyer Park neighborhood. Twenty of them show delinquent property taxes to the sum total of \$185,817.62. (!!)

The only property to have taxes paid to date is 521/523 Desnoyer Avenue, the property that came before the hearing officer at three hearings earlier this year and was pushed to resolution under threat of demolition. Questions: At what point does the city and/or county move on a property owner to recoup taxes owed? How is it possible that a single property owner is allowed to go so long and fail to pay so much with no apparent repercussions? We citizens want to know what the city is going to do about Olson's unpaid taxes. Is he getting preferential treatment for some reason, as some have alleged?

Regarding 501/503 Desnoyer Avenue: This property is listed as vacant as of June 29, 2017, on the city's web page (<https://www.stpaul.gov/books/demolitions>) but is currently occupied on the 503 side. These tenants were recently given an eviction notice by the city and told to be out by July 26. Questions: Can you explain this discrepancy of information and clarify the process the city follows to determine vacancy/revocation of certificate of occupancy/eviction? How much time are tenants given to vacate a condemned property? Is the city prepared to assist the tenants in finding suitable housing, as stated in the recent housing resolution?

Regarding 515/517 Desnoyer Avenue: This double bungalow is currently listed as vacant and we believe it is actually vacant. It is in deplorable condition. Question: Where is this property on the city's list of actionable problem properties and how can we be of assistance in expediting the process? How do we make sure we are notified of hearings so that we may attend?

Regarding 521/523 Desnoyer Avenue: After multiple legislative hearings and convoluted dealings, Mr. Chermak of Grand End LLC, has been renovating this two-story side-by-side duplex. Recently a new metal roof was put on the detached garage. This metal roof was hastily tacked on over the rotten roof, with no repairs made to the garage roof that has a gigantic hole in it or to the sagging rafters. Question: Is this type of repair acceptable and up to code?

Regarding 604/606 Desnoyer Avenue: This property is also currently listed as vacant, however after doing a drive-by today, we must tell you there are tenants. Lights were on and there was movement inside. Question: Can you confirm that repairs were done and the appropriate inspections have given the green light to Mr. Olson to be collecting rent from tenants for this property since it was declared vacant?

While we have many questions and complaints about Mr. Olson's dilapidated and dangerous rundown rental units, and his lack of management skills, we have no problem with having and keeping rental properties in our neighborhood. We have had good relationships with nearly all of the renters who have lived here over the years. In fact we fully support the resolution put forth by the city council at the Wednesday meeting delineating steps to improve housing options in our city. We would love Olson's properties to be part of the solution. It's shameful however, that other property owners in Desnoyer Park who take care of their properties above and beyond what's expected, improving and investing, have to put up with Mr. Olson's dereliction of duty and breaking of many laws where his properties are concerned. And it's infuriating that he's allowed to be delinquent on his property taxes to such an extreme degree.

What we ask is that Mr. Olson be held accountable for the condition of all of his properties in our fine city, according to the law, and we want his tenants to be safe and comfortable in their homes. The Olson family and its properties have been a scourge on our wonderful neighborhood for nearly two decades, so we truly appreciate your help and attention to these matters.

We invite you to visit Desnoyer Park. While you tour our neighborhood, make note of any run down and abandoned properties. We are confident you will find they are Olson properties that either are or will be in the city's pipeline. We also invite you to the next hearing on July 31, 9:00 a.m., to meet us. We're looking for resolution through the appropriate channels and that's why we're coming to you. Our next step is to go to the media, but we'll await your response.

Respectfully,

Bill and Tracy Young
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