

August 31, 2017

Saint Paul City Council  
15 West Kellogg Boulevard  
Suite 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

**Sent by Email**

**Re: 705 Summit Avenue Appeal of Notice to Vacate**

Dear Council President Stark and Councilmembers Bostrom, Brendmoen, Noecker, Prince, Thao and Tolbert;

We are writing as concerned neighbors of 705 Summit Avenue. Many of us have, especially over recent years as the tenant mix has changed, called or sent in complaints about issues regarding this property. Initially, it appeared to mainly house St. Thomas students, and while there were occasional incidents, they were minor in nature.

However, in the summer of 2011 there was a serious fire on the third floor that required several fire trucks and supporting vehicles to extinguish. Sparks were flying, endangering surrounding residences, as well as this historically-significant Cass Gilbert house, itself. It was apparently due to faulty wiring. Luckily nobody was hurt—neither tenants nor the many fire fighters who risked heat exhaustion on one of the most hot and humid days of that summer.

Since then, the tenancy has changed for the worse. There has been suspicious activity at all hours of the day and night, much of which appears drug-related, as well as large dogs who have been tied up outside and gotten loose, trash not picked up for weeks, vehicles parked on the street in the same location for days and weeks on end—in violation of City regulations—and an overall sense that the comings and goings at this residence are out of proportion to the number of residents a property of this size and number of allowed units would account for.

The shooting that occurred from the driveway of the property around 9 pm on Sunday, February 12, 2017 brought things to a head from the perspective of the neighborhood. Luckily nobody was killed, but as neighbors stood outside in the cold night watching the police do their work, many expressed shock, but not surprise, that this had happened, sharing their stories and observations.

Thus, we have been grateful that the City staff and the St. Paul Police Department have been focused on addressing this problem property. We were heartened when we found out about the moves to vacate the tenants and require that the building and grounds be brought up to code.

While we respect the process and Kenneth Doyle's right to appeal, it is clear from not only our own observations, but also from the report from the latest inspection of 8/28, that very little progress has been made in terms of making the necessary corrections. Moreover, we are concerned on several fronts:

- There are tenants remaining in the building whose health and safety is endangered amidst mold, electrical problems, a leaking and degrading boiler, and numerous other deficiencies with basic maintenance, safety features like smoke and CO alarms, and the overall soundness of the building.

- Blatant drug-related activity continues. Many of us still regularly see drug transactions which are connected to this house. Whether due to existing or recent tenants, or previous tenants, 705 Summit has become a convenient and known place for drug transactions.
- We fear for our safety, personally, and for that of our neighbors and neighbors' children, due to this criminal activity, as well as the very real possibility of another fire that threatens our homes and property.
- To have this Cass Gilbert-designed house fall into increasing disrepair within weeks of the entire state of Minnesota celebrating the renovation and re-opening of the Cass Gilbert-designed state capitol is a tragedy that shouldn't continue.

In Mr. Doyle's appeal letter of 8/21, there are several misstatements and falsehoods which we feel we need to address:

- Contrary to Mr. Doyle's assertion under item #6, there has never been a meeting at Michael Hartoonian's home to discuss this issue. Neighbors have discussed it through emails and phone calls in an effort to stay up to date on what is happening, as is their right. We have also sent in letters and emails during this process (see those attached to RLH VBR 17-52 and 17-60), in addition to contacting the City's citizen complaint line and website. The City DSI Online website for this property ([https://online.stpaul.gov/web/portal/public-search?p\\_auth=mnboY5QY&p\\_p\\_id=SmartPortletJSR286\\_WAR\\_smartlets\\_INSTANCE\\_skjyrEC9u\\_pVQ&p\\_p\\_lifecycle=1&p\\_p\\_state=normal&p\\_p\\_mode=view&p\\_p\\_col\\_id=column-1&p\\_p\\_col\\_count=1](https://online.stpaul.gov/web/portal/public-search?p_auth=mnboY5QY&p_p_id=SmartPortletJSR286_WAR_smartlets_INSTANCE_skjyrEC9u_pVQ&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-1&p_p_col_count=1)) shows 18 CSO complaints just since 9/26/16, as well as two Parks Summary Abatements for garbage/rubbish.
- Under item #2 where Mr. Doyle states, "...it has been suggested that some neighbors do not like the idea of Blacks, families with young children, or disabled persons living on Summit Avenue." This is both unwarranted and unfounded, and to say something like that is indicative of either desperation or a deep lack of understanding about his neighbors and neighborhood.
- Mr. Doyle repeatedly states things like "...there are no hazardous conditions," (item #2); "...the building is not hazardous, and it is certainly not in disrepair," (item #3); "Requiring full code compliance is appropriate only for buildings which that are either hazardous or in serious disrepair." (item #4); "...I finally got the building into excellent condition and rental units occupied by excellent tenants." (item #7). However, as noted in the inspection reports and photos from multiple inspection visits, police reports, and by Mr. Doyle's own admission, this building neither is nor was in excellent condition, nor was it consistently populated with excellent tenants. His inability to admit or acknowledge the many problems this property has currently and has had over the years does not bode well for his ability to identify good tenants or maintain the building in the future. Furthermore, not acknowledging that every St. Paul resident has a legal obligation to adhere to all aspects of the code is also disturbing.
- Mr. Doyle alleges that he has obtained all necessary permits for the work needed. However, he waited to have the work done until well after the first Notice to Vacate inspection on July 7 and his appeal hearing on 7/11. According to the DSI website above, two permits were issued on 7/18 and another on 7/25. None were for electrical work, and the combined estimated value was only \$1775. This clearly does not demonstrate either a willingness to do the required work or even a good-faith attempt at addressing the numerous deficiencies which were identified over multiple inspections.
- Mr. Doyle makes several statements alleging that his age and disabilities make him not subject to City laws and an obligation to adhere to the code. This is patently false and again, calls into



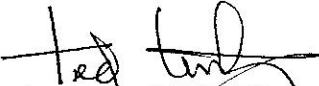
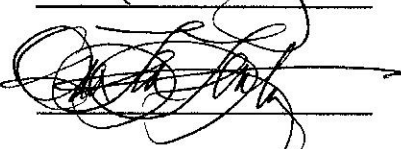
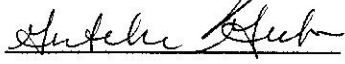

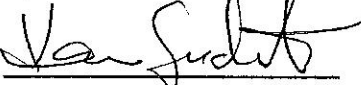
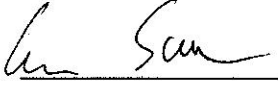
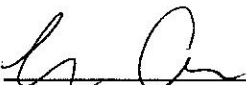
serious question his credibility around his intent and ability to meet his obligations as a property owner and a landlord.

Mr. Doyle has shown himself to be neither a good neighbor to those who live around him, nor a responsible landlord to his tenants, including those who are especially vulnerable, nor a good steward of this Cass Gilbert-designed house which he does not care enough about to maintain at even the most minimum of standards. These have become long-standing issues and there is no reasonable expectation that things will change if Mr. Doyle is allowed to remain in place and continue renting out units in his building.

We respectfully request that the City Council deny Mr. Doyle's appeal, and require him to vacate the building until he can bring it up to the standards of maintenance and cleanliness that the code requires. We also request that, at least until the building is vacated, that the St. Paul Police Department increase its patrolling and surveillance of this property to deter the drug-related activity that is clearly still occurring.

Thank you,

The undersigned:

Name	Signature	Address
<u>Justin Windschitl</u>	<u></u>	<u>701 Summit Ave</u>
<u>Dustin Schmidt</u>	<u></u>	<u>701 Summit Ave.</u>
<u>TED LEUTZ</u>	<u></u>	<u>692 Summit Ave.</u>
<u>Ona Leutz</u>	<u></u>	<u>692 Summit Ave.</u>
<u>Gretchen Guenter</u>	<u></u>	<u>9 St. Albans St. S #3</u>
<u>Jim Guenter</u>	<u></u>	<u>9 St. Albans St. S #3</u>
<u>KARI SUNDSTROM</u>	<u></u>	<u>9 St. Albans St. S. #2</u>
<u>Eera Savolainen</u>	<u></u>	<u>9 St. Albans St S #2</u>
<u>Leah Guenter</u>	<u></u>	<u>9 St. Alban St. S #3</u>


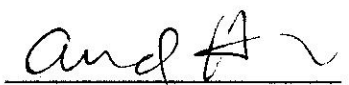
serious question his credibility around his intent and ability to meet his obligations as a property owner and a landlord.

Mr. Doyle has shown himself to be neither a good neighbor to those who live around him, nor a responsible landlord to his tenants, including those who are especially vulnerable, nor a good steward of this Cass Gilbert-designed house which he does not care enough about to maintain at even the most minimum of standards. These have become long-standing issues and there is no reasonable expectation that things will change if Mr. Doyle is allowed to remain in place and continue renting out units in his building.

We respectfully request that the City Council deny Mr. Doyle's appeal, and require him to vacate the building until he can bring it up to the standards of maintenance and cleanliness that the code requires. We also request that, at least until the building is vacated, that the St. Paul Police Department increase its patrolling and surveillance of this property to deter the drug-related activity that is clearly still occurring.

Thank you,

The undersigned:

Name	Signature	Address
<u>M. Hartonian</u>		<u>710 Summit Ave 5</u>
<u>Seth Greenwald</u>		<u>710 Summit Ave #2</u>
<u>Heather Clayton</u>		<u>710 Summit Ave #3</u>
<u>Michael Orth</u>		<u>710 Summit Ave #3</u>
<u><del>Star</del> Annie Halland</u>		<u>720 Summit Ave</u>

Marilyn Bach

Sonja Mason

Jeanne Mason

Lori Broxton

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

W. Bach

Bach

Jonathan Mason

Mason

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9 Saint Albans St. So.

21 ST ALBANS ST S.

"

710 Summit #1

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Patricia Thompson     Patricia     710 Summit

Stephanie Schuh-greenwald     Stephanie     710 Summit

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____