

Ken Doyle – 705 Summit

1. I've owned, managed, and lived in a Cass Gilbert mansion on Summit Avenue (my apartment plus five rental units) for about 30 years. During that time I've had few if any problems with the City. In fact, I have enjoyed an excellent reputation as a good citizen and a responsible landlord.
2. In 2010 I contracted Legionnaires' Disease and almost died – a month in a coma, a year in a nursing home learning how to walk and talk again, therapy ever since. I'm now back to work as a University of Minnesota professor, but with ADA accommodations – Americans with Disabilities Act -- because of my problems walking and talking, and my diminished energy.
3. Because I could no longer manage my building by myself, I hired a caretaker/manager.
4. I had a set of problem tenants last year who occasioned too many disturbance calls. I evicted them. Around the same time there was a shooting in front of my house. A gangster mistook one of my tenants (a Black law student from Mitchell-Hamline) for someone who owed him money – pure mistaken identity. Because of these problems, a Fire Inspector gave me a long list of repairs to be made, many of which were the result of vandalism by the problem tenants.
5. When I discovered that my caretaker/manager couldn't keep up with the required repairs, I hired a replacement, who has turned things around completely. Under his guidance, we finished all the work the Fire Inspector required before the City Council's deadline.
6. While we had all the work done by the City Council deadline, the roofing and sheet rock inspector said he was so overbooked that he couldn't come out for roughly two weeks. He explained that the Department of Inspections would "accommodate" clients who were on deadlines. Nevertheless, because the final inspections weren't completed on time although the work was, the Fire Inspector condemned my property and ordered all the tenants to move out.
7. In person the Fire Inspector stressed the need to put fire-resistant sheet rock on the electrical room and furnace room ceilings. We did that, and we did it on time. But on her final visit the Fire Inspector said that she had meant we should sheetrock some closets as well. If we had known that, we would have sheet rocked the closets on time too. But because we thought, in good faith, that we were to do only the electrical room and furnace room, the best we could do was sheet rock the closets after her visit. The Fire Inspector added this misunderstanding to her reasons for condemning my house.
8. Her decision will impose a major hardship on my tenants --- including two families with children, one a special needs child – and on me. She has also ordered a Code Compliance Inspection, which my lawyer says will probably result in tens of thousands of dollars in expenses and lost rents.
9. This seems way too severe a punishment simply because a) the city roofing and sheetrock inspector couldn't come till well after we had finished the work, and b) we simply didn't understand that the Fire Inspector wanted us to sheet rock the closets too. (We offered to pay for a "dress rehearsal" inspection to avoid any such misunderstandings, but the Inspector refused.)

Accordingly, out of simple fairness and as an ADA Accommodation to my disability, I ask the City Council to declare the work done on time and to quash the Vacate Order and the Code Compliance Order.