

I'm here today to ask the city to take immediate action on the property in question, the double bungalow at 522/524 Otis Ave. in St. Paul.

Our home is next door. This is a property that has given us grief for years, going on decades – not the renters, the property and more specifically the landlord. We ask that the city move on this property post-haste for three reasons.

Most problematic is the landlord, Jay Olson, who clearly lacks the skills to care for his property. He sends in 'his man' Jake, who does little more than occasionally rides a lawn tractor around, while eaves rot, gutters collapse, and animals enter the property through well-known holes. The front walk is icy all winter, until one of us neighbors shovels it or we complain to the city and they come out to do it. We have had to make countless reports to the city complaints department about lack of basic maintenance on this particular property. Mr. Olson fails to demonstrate any managerial skills, instead deflects issues to his front man, refuses to return phone calls, and really only shows up when authorities are called.

Mr. Olson appears to lack the resources to take care of his property. He clearly doesn't have time to take care of the property, as we understand he is employed full time as a deputy fire chief in St Anthony Village. His son told us nearly ten years ago he was trying to convince his dad to sell the property because they just couldn't keep up with it. We have offered to buy it but he wouldn't sell. Given the Band-Aid approach to repairs we have witnessed on his property, a blue tarp tacked onto the roof for the past three years, for example, it is clear to us that Mr. Olsen doesn't have money for proper upkeep of his rental units. And speaking of money, according to the Ramsey County website which is updated daily, unpaid taxes for this property alone, amount to nearly \$14,000, with the total for all his Desnoyer Park properties is in the \$200,000 range – this is his taxes in arrears.

We know very well that Mr. Olson was in this same predicament less than six months ago with another property on the opposite side of the block and had to cobble together a last-minute plan with a neighbor to avoid demolition. And this was for a property he claimed he actually cared about! The fact that he hasn't maintained the property at 522/524 Otis Avenue for years is mind-boggling, given the potential for him to bring money in from renters. The whole money question here makes absolutely no sense to us.

Finally, we believe Mr. Olson simply does not care about what goes on with his properties here in Desnoyer Park. He lives in an expensive, secluded home in Forest Lake; he is respected as a high level civil servant, and the property he's responsible for over here in our neighborhood is to him simply out of sight out of mind. If he cared he'd take care of it. If he cared he'd respond to phone calls. If he cared a family with small children wouldn't have been forced out because of untenable living conditions: black mold in the basement and squirrels coming in through holes in the roof. If he cared we'd know it in countless ways. Instead we know in countless ways that he doesn't care about 522/524 Otis Ave. The pattern of neglect we've witnessed has resulted in five of his rental units being condemned and categorized as unfit for human habitation in our neighborhood in the past year, and we have no reason to believe this tiger will change his stripes.

We appreciate the opportunity to present our concerns here to this body. We trust the decision of the hearing officer, knowing that holding Mr. Olson's feet to the fire through this process is the only way to get him to pay attention and take care of his properties. We believe that unless Mr. Olson today provides a detailed plan of action with evidence of funding, of professionals doing the work of bringing this property to code, the pattern and culture of neglect will continue and the structure should be taken down.

Thank you.

Bill and Tracy Young
526 Otis Ave.
St. Paul