

NOTES OF THE PROPERTY CODE ENFORCEMENT MEETING

August 18, 1998

Room 330, City Hall

Gerry Strathman, Legislative Hearing Officer

Staff Present: Pat Fish, Fire Prevention; Jeff Hawkins, Code Enforcement; Karl Johnson, Public Works; Jean LaClare, Code Enforcement; Rich Singerhouse, Code Enforcement

337 Bates Avenue

Michael Diesslin, owner, appeared and stated he received a letter from Code Enforcement about storing vehicles. The letter is not true. Mr. Diesslin stated he has two cars and his wife has a couple of cars. He also owns two converted school buses. One is parked in the driveway behind the garage. It is used a couple of times a year and it is started every few weeks. Every time he has to get in the garage, it has to be pulled over to the side. It is operable and licensed. Saint Paul is redoing all the streets in the neighborhood, therefore the Diesslins have to park off the street. One of the neighbors keeps complaining. The City has come out before and said the vehicles are operable and that was it. The Diesslins have a driveway coming in on Bates leading back to the garage. There is one bus parked there. There is a parking area in back of the property.

Michael Diesslin showed photographs to Gerry Strathman showing the property and the vehicles.

Rich Singerhouse reported there have been complaints over the past three years. Michael Diesslin has complied with all the previous orders. This is an approved surface and the vehicles are licensed. The orders are not for that. The complaints are that the situation is an eyesore and creating a nuisance. Gerry Strathman asked are there any other ordinances being violated. Mr. Singerhouse responded the owner is running electrical cords. Rich Diesslin stated those are all low voltage power cords. There is no law against that and they are fused at the low current. He has occasionally run a 110 volt extension cord in the bus while doing some remodeling, but he has never left them plugged in.

Keith Kinning, 784 Agate Street, appeared and stated the vehicles are operable.

Gerry Strathman stated the basic issue is visual blight.

Rich Singerhouse showed photographs to Gerry Strathman.

Gerry Strathman stated if the vehicles are legally parked and licensed, he does not know how the City can interfere. There is within the City Code, a provision prohibiting anything that is a blighting influence in the neighborhood. This could extend to old vehicles. However, if the City were to claim that all old vehicles constitute a blight, there are a lot of old vehicles in Saint Paul.

Mr. Strathman stated there was another item on this order having to do with chipping and peeling paint on the garage. Michael Diesslin responded the order said he had until August 24, and it will be done by then.

Gerry Strathman denied the appeal on the garage. He granted the appeal on the exterior storage of the vehicles citing he is concerned about the idea that old vehicles could be considered a blight in and

of themselves. However, the owner should recognize that this does not look good to some people. Mr. Strathman recommended the owner do something to lessen the visual clutter. Michael Diesslin stated he does plan on moving one of the buses to his hunting place.