

PAYNE PHALEN DISTRICT FIVE PLANNING COUNCIL

STRONG  SAFE  WELCOMING  CONNECTED  NEIGHBORHOODS

September 20, 2013

Legislative Hearing Officer
310 City Hall
15 Kellogg Blvd., West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Marcia Moermond:

The District Five Community Planning & Economic Development Committee (CPED) conveys to your office and the City of Saint Paul, the following recommendations on behalf of Ronald J. Adams of 676 Wells. The Committee is very appreciative of all efforts made to bring a resolution to this matter so that the property owner may re-inhabit the home at 676 Wells.

On September 10th, 2013, the Payne Phalen District Five Planning Council's CPED Committee passed a unanimous motion to respectfully request the following considerations by the City of Saint Paul in the matter of the condemnation of 676 Wells.

- 1. Request that 676 Wells have an immediate re-inspection to establish the baseline condition of 676 Wells. DSI inspectors can establish the basis for current or future repairs. CPED's goal is to assure clarity and finding of facts about present conditions at the house and to re-issue orders based on the current conditions of the property.**

There is apparent disagreement about how the written orders apply to the current conditions of the house. A re-inspection allows for fair and clear assessment of work that is completed or needs to be completed at this point in time.

- 2. Request that the City waive the \$ 5000 performance bond currently imposed on the property owner. The County registers the value of the home as greater than \$5,000, taxes are paid and the owner is invested in retaining the home and has committed to work to this end.**

There are confusing aspects to the communications from the City to the property owners – particularly around the permits that were pulled, re-inspections and the work currently being required or completed.

506 KENNY ROAD, SUITE 130, SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55130-4554

TEL # (651) 774-5234  FAX # (651) 774-9745

E-MAIL: DISTRICT5@PAYNEPHALEN.ORG

WWW.PAYNEPHALEN.ORG

- 3. Request for the maximum time permitted for any necessary repairs to be made. The Committee suggested a 120 day "cooling off" period so that facts about the issue may be further explored and examined by DSI and the property owner.**

The matter of 676 Wells has been widely publicized. There is public opinion expressed that the City is perceived to have a potential conflict of interest in the condemnation of 676 Wells. There is an apparent perception that the City would have a financial interest in condemnation of 676 Wells to reduce or avoid potential costs associated with mitigating the retaining wall found on the City's adjacently owned properties. CPED found this basis sufficient to suggest that a waiting period permit time for repairs, but also to assure that all facts may be further examined. District Five supports the City to assure fairness and transparency in its dealings with local residents. CPED stated that time in this matter would benefit the City, the property owner and the community.

- 4. Request that City and community housing resources be mobilized to assist this home owner to retain their home. The Committee feels public funds are better used to preserve housing rather than demolish it.**

There are many commercial and residential properties that are in worse condition than 676 Wells. The house has several features which preserve the historic character of the neighborhood. The costs of supporting a long-term resident to remain in their home are less than to destroy the property and the well-being of a long-term neighbor and Saint Paul resident.

Please contact me if I can offer further clarification of the Committee's position and request. I can be reached at 651-774-5234. District Five appreciates your consideration of these recommendations and thanks you for your work on this matter.

Sincerely,



Leslie McMurray, Executive Director

CC: Ward 6
Mr. Ronald J. Adams and Beth Woolsey
Mr. Ricardo Cervantes