



**Building and Standards Commission  
Minutes of Public Nuisance Abatement Hearing  
Thursday, May 15, 2025  
4:00 PM**

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**Commissioners Present:** Wally Cox, Jess Cason, Michael Blake, Lynnette Scruggs, and Chuck Reiter

**Commissioners Absent:** Jock Conner and Kenneth Skinner

**Chairperson:** Wally Cox

**Staff Present:** Code Enforcement Officer Jennifer Ekstrand, Code Enforcement Officer Tim Stanley, Code Enforcement Officer David Lauteren, Code Compliance Officer Chance Llano, Building Official Mike Doughty, Permit Tech Patty Pierce, and Administrative Assistant Javonna Cannon

**Visitors Present:** Brenda Cryer (Interpreter), Zac Loiselle, Emily Loiselle, Rossina Ortega, Osid G. from North Texas Remodeler, Praveen Morusupalli, Naidelin Reyes, Genaro Dela Cruz, Juana Dela Cruz

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**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER**

With a quorum present, Chairman Cox called the hearing to order at 4:08 p.m.

**ITEM 2: SWEARING IN OF NEW COMMISSIONERS**

Judge Cypert swore in new commissioners Chuck Reiter and Lynette Scruggs.

**ITEM 3: SWEARING IN OF REAPPOINTED MEMBERS**

Chairman Cox tabled this item until the next hearing.

**ITEM 4: ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON**

CEO Ekstrand advised that a new chairperson needed to be nominated and asked the Commission if someone would like to make a nomination. Commissioner Cason made a motion to nominate Commissioner Cox as the Chair. Commissioner Scruggs seconded the motion. All present voted Aye and the motion carried unanimously.

**ITEM 5: SWEARING IN OF WITNESSES**

Chair Cox swore in all staff and visitors who would testify in the hearing.

**ITEM 6: SWEARING IN OF INTERPRETER**

Chair Cox swore in Brenda Cryer, interpreter.

**ITEM 7: APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chairman Cox read the item into the record and asked if anyone had any questions or changes for the minutes. Commissioner Cason moved to accept the minutes as presented. Chair Cox seconded. All present voted aye and the motion carried unanimously.

**ITEM 8: CASE #24-002327 | 910 BELCHER**

CEO Ekstrand presented the case history to the Commission. She explained that the majority of past violations were from a previous owner. She presented the violations and criteria for the dilapidated/substandard structure and showed several pictures as evidence. She then summarized staff's case for the Commission. On conclusion, she advised that the property owner and his contractor were in the audience and would like to address the Commission to request time to repair the structure. Chair Cox requested the owner to approach and asked if he was prepared to repair the structure. Owner, Mr. Morusupalli, stated he was ready to get started immediately. Chair Cox asked him what his timeframe was to complete repairs. Mr. Morusupalli said three to four months. CEO Ekstrand explained that the most the Commission could grant was 90 days but as long as there was forward progress being made, staff could extend the timeframe to allow for completion. She explained that forward progress meant inspections must be called in and passed to move on. The owner stated his agreement. Chair Cox asked for staff's recommendation. CEO Ekstrand presented as follows:

Staff recommends the Building and Standards Commission finds the structure located at 910 Belcher is dilapidated/substandard based on the conditions as presented and is therefore a nuisance. The Commission orders the owner to abate the nuisance by pulling permits to repair the structure and bringing it up to current city codes within 90 days. Inspections must be passed to fulfill the terms of this order. If the owner fails to abate the nuisance, staff shall demolish the structure at the owner's expense.

Building Official Mike Doughty addressed the Commission and reminded them that once a structure case was brought before the Commission, it was no longer a simple remodel. Once a case reaches this stage, the building must be brought up to current adopted codes. Chair Cox acknowledged his understanding and requested a motion.

Commissioner Blake moved to accept staff's recommendation as presented. Commissioner Scruggs seconded. All present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

**ITEM 9: #22-000753 | 739 RITCHEY**

Chair Cox read the item into record. CEO Ekstrand advised that there wasn't a presentation for this item. She explained the Commission had heard the case in January 2024 and issued a demolition order; however, just before demolition, staff discovered that there had been an ownership change. Staff reached out to the new owner who was unaware of the pending demolition and wanted to repair the

structure. CEO Ekstrand clarified that the BSC would have to vacate the previous order and issue a new one to allow the owner to repair. She told the BSC that the owner was Mr. Morusupalli, the gentleman they had just met from the previous case. Commissioner Blake commented that it was an ambitious undertaking and was going to take quite a bit of money to bring both of these structures up to current codes. He asked if the owner was aware and was prepared for that. Mr. Morusupalli stated he was aware. Commissioner Cason reminded the owner that he must have state licensed contractors for the electrical and plumbing work. The owner acknowledged he understood and the contractors were already decided on. CEO Ekstrand then reminded that the structure had originally been a commercial building although the last use was residential. She confirmed with Building Official Doughty, because of its original status as a commercial structure, the owner would have to obtain an asbestos study before any permits could be issued. Commissioner Cason asked the owner if he was aware how expensive asbestos abatement was. The owner stated he was aware and he was prepared. A comment from the Commission prompted CEO Ekstrand to remind the owner that the structure could be remodeled to be used as a residential structure but not commercial as the current zoning was Single Family 2. The owner stated his intent was to remodel it as a residential structure.

Chair Cox asked for staff's recommendation. CEO Ekstrand presented: staff recommends that due to the change in ownership after order 22-000753-1 was issued, and the new owner's desire to rehabilitate the structure, the Building and Standards Commission of the City of Gainesville hereby vacates Order #22-000753-1; and,

The Commission finds that the structure located at 739 Ritchey is dilapidated/substandard based on the evidence presented and is in violation of Ordinance Part II, Chapter 5, Article III, Division 2, Ordinance #442 and Division 3, Section 5-111, Ordinance #1361, and constitutes a hazard to the health, safety and welfare of the citizens, and is therefore a nuisance. The Commission orders the owner to abate the nuisance by submitting the required asbestos report, pulling the required permits and bringing the structure up to current city code within 90 days. Inspections must be passed to fulfill the terms of this order. If the owner fails to fulfill the order, the city shall demolish the structure at the owner's expense.

Chair Cox asked for a motion which was offered by Commissioner Blake to accept staff's recommendation as presented. Commissioner Cason seconded. All present voted aye and the motion carried unanimously.

**ITEM 10: #25-000378 | 606 MILL**

Chairman Cox read the item into the record. CEO Ekstrand presented property history and moved in to the dilapidated conditions noted by staff. She told the Commission that construction (without permits) had been started after the house had been tagged substandard. She stated she believed that there was a definite language barrier in addition to six different people including the owner, her father, her mother, her aunt and two neighbors had all contacted different staff members with questions. CEO Ekstrand explained this caused confusion and misinformation being provided. She went on to say that staff was prepared to allow the owner time to repair but they must come in and pull permits to do so. CEO Ekstrand explained that staff had already received permit

applications and would be ready to issue the construction permit but could not do so until the plumbing and electrical contractors had come in to pull their permits. She pointed out that this had been a point of confusion for the owner and her representatives. CEO Ekstrand advised the Commission that the owner and her representatives were in the audience and would like to address them before she gave her recommendations.

Chairman Cox asked the representative to approach the podium. Ms. Loiselle approached and told the Commission she was a family friend. She then said that the family had decided to demolish the structure and to build new at a later time. She said that it had just been decided at the last minute. CEO Ekstrand asked if they could complete the demolition within 30 days. The interpreter, Brenda Cryer, said the owner thought 30 days would be enough. CEO Ekstrand offered 60 days to complete the demolition since they would be doing it themselves. Ms. Cryer said yes, the 60 days would be better.

CEO Ekstrand then addressed the Commission. She explained that the BSC should still issue an order with a finding that the structure was in violation of the ordinance and a nuisance, but she would revise the recommendation as follows:

The Building and Standards Commission finds the structure located at 606 Mill is dilapidated/substandard based on the listed conditions (as presented) and is therefore a nuisance. The Commission orders the owner to abate the nuisance by demolishing the structure within 60 days. If the owner fails to abate the nuisance, staff shall demolish the structure at the owner's expense.

Chair Cox asked if there was a motion. Commissioner Blake made a motion to accept staff's recommendation as revised. Commissioner Scruggs seconded. All present voted aye and the motion carried unanimously.

**ITEM 11: #25-000074 | 1708 DOVER**

Chair Cox read the item into the record. CEO Ekstrand presented the property history and told the Commission that on January 7, 2025, the house had been completely destroyed by fire. She explained that in addition to ordinances #442 and #1361, and the condition the house was currently in, there was also a violation of Part II, Chapter 5, Article I, Section 5-1(a)(9), IPMC 2018, Section 108.1.5(3) #1511 for Dangerous Structure or Premises. She reiterated that the current state of the property met every condition of the substandard building ordinance. She presented all items for faulty weather protection, inadequate sanitation, hazardous mechanical equipment, hazardous premises, hazardous plumbing, hazardous wiring, inadequate exits, inadequate fire protection, and structural hazards. CEO Ekstrand then showed pictures taken by the Fire Dept. during the call and during the Fire Marshal investigation. She told the Commission that the Fire Marshal was getting complaints every day about the structure still standing and he said it needs to come down. CEO Ekstrand emphasized the danger of having it still standing. Building Official Doughty commented that it had to come down.

CEO Ekstrand told the Commission that someone was in the audience representing the property. Rossina Ortega, attorney representing the lender M&T Bank, told the

Commission that the bank still has an interest in the property as the mortgage has not been paid. They are currently looking into a creditor probate because the insurance company paid out to the property heir without paying the bank. The bank has been unable to connect with the heir. Ms. Ortega said the bank is just asking for more time to perfect their documents for the court. Chairman Cox asked about the liability for the bank and the city if the structure was left standing. CEO Ekstrand stated the city has the responsibility to remove the structure in its current state. She explained, again, that the structure is an immediate hazard and should be demolished. Building Official Doughty agreed that the structure is an immediate hazard and needs to come down.

Chairman Cox asked for staff's recommendation which was presented by CEO Ekstrand: staff recommends the BSC finds the structure is in violation of the ordinance as it meets every element of the substandard structure ordinance, and is therefore a nuisance. The Commission orders the owner to demolish the structure within 30 days and remove the debris to a landfill. If the owner fails to abate the nuisance, the city shall demolish at the owner's expense.

Chairman Cox commented that the structure needs to come down. He asked for a motion which was offered by Commissioner Blake and seconded by Commissioner Scruggs. All present voted aye and the motion carried unanimously.

CEO Ekstrand explained to Ms. Ortega that because the bank has an interest in the property, they could appeal the BSC's order within 30 days directly to district court. She also advised that the city would not begin demolition until day 31 after the hearing. Ms. Ortega asked what the bank could expect as far as demolition costs. She asked if it would be \$20,000? CEO Ekstrand said she wasn't sure but the majority of the cost would be landfill fees. Ms. Ortega left her contact information for an estimate of the costs.

With no further business, Chairman Cox adjourned the hearing at 4:48 p.m.

Signature of Chairperson:  Date: 7-17-25

Signature of Secretary:  Date: 7-17-2025