



## **TOWN OF GRIFFITH UNSAFE BUILDING COMMITTEE OCTOBER 19, 2023 MEETING MINUTES**

The Town of Griffith Unsafe Building Committee Meeting scheduled for October 19, 2023 was called to order by Chairman Rick Ryfa at 3:31 PM.

### **THOSE IN ATTENDANCE**

Town Councilman Rick Ryfa, Chairman  
George Jerome, Vice-Chairman  
Police Chief Greg Mance, Member – **Absent**  
Fire Chief Roy Schoon, Member  
Commander Jim Sibley (proxy for Chief Greg Mance)  
Building Commissioner Steve McDermott – **Absent**  
Attorney Alfredo Estrada

The Pledge of Allegiance was held.

### **1. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2023 MINUTES**

Chief Schoon made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2023 Unsafe Building Committee Meeting as presented.

Vice-Chairman Jerome seconded the motion.

Motion carried 4 – 0.

### **2. UNSAFE BUILDING**

- a. 207 N Lafayette St., Griffith, IN**
- b. 231 N. Jay St., Griffith, IN**

Attorney Benajmin Murphy appeared at this hearing to provide an update on these two (2) properties on behalf of property owner Andriana Wright.

Regarding 231 N. Jay St., Attorney Murphy stated he has been in contact with the insurance company regarding this property, and their adjuster wants to meet with Building Commissioner McDermott regarding the work that needs to be done, and to make sure they were all on the same page. There is potential for insurance funds regarding this property.

Regarding 207 N. Lafayette St., Attorney Murphy stated it looked like the grass has been cut.

Attorney Estrada stated Attorney Murphy has been in contact with him throughout the last month with updates. Attorney Murphy did reach out for Building Commissioner McDermott's contact information. Further, Attorney Murphy informed the Committee about the adjuster and some potential insurance funds. Attorney Estrada stated things are moving in the right direction and therefore, he suggested giving Attorney Murphy time to get things moving for repairs, and to give him a continuance till November 16, 2023.



Vice-Chairman Jerome made a motion to continue the matter on these two properties till the next meeting scheduled for November 16, 2023.

Chief Schoon seconded the motion.

The motion carried (4-0).

**c. 140 N. Lindberg St., Griffith, IN**

No subjects were present to represent this property.

Attorney Estrada advised the new owner of this property was Preferred Homes, LLC, who quickly sold this property to a new owner. Attorney Estrada stated he is not sure whether the second new owner has received notice of this hearing. The law requires owners to inform buyers of these proceedings; however, he is not sure that occurred. Attorney Estrada requested a 30-day continuance on this property, which would allow him time to get in contact with the new owner(s) and to find out whether they are aware of these proceedings.

Vice-Chairman Jerome made a motion to continue this matter till the next meeting scheduled for November 16, 2023.

Chief Schoon seconded the motion.

The motion carried (4-0).

**d. 117 N. Raymond St., Griffith, IN**

No subjects were present to represent this property.

Attorney Estrada stated the property owners are generally here every month. It is a bit of a surprise they are not here today and hopefully; everything is okay. They have been slowly, but surely, making improvements. Mr. McDermott is not here today to give an update. Because of the owners generally good attendance, Attorney Estrada suggested giving them a 30-day continuance just to make sure everything is okay.

Chief Schoon made a motion to continue this matter till the next meeting scheduled for November 16, 2023

Vice-Chairman Jerome seconded the motion.

The motion carried (4-0).

**e. 715 W. Miller St., Griffith, IN**

No subjects were present to represent this property.

Attorney Estrada stated he believed there was a Fire Inspection Report done on this property. Fire Marshall Steve Stelk stated he went with Chief Schoon to this property, and they completed a Fire Inspection. There were numerous violations noted. Mr. Stelk stated he did speak with a resident who complained they had a window that they could not secure or properly close. They also have damage to the sill of the doorway, so they are constantly getting bugs and other things coming into the apartment. It was observed that a lot of the outside doors on the lower level are all weathered. From a visual standpoint, it appeared the doors



were not sitting squarely in their location. One resident also complained the heat has not been turned on yet, and they are heating their apartment with a space heater, which is a fire fighter's nightmare.

In response to Chairman Ryfa's query, Attorney Estrada advised there was a demolition order entered into by this Committee, and it has been recorded out at the County. Since the owner is not here again and the demolition order has been issued, Attorney Estrada requested approval on behalf of the Building Inspector to seek bids for demolition. Chairman Ryfa asked if the Building Inspector would be seeking the bids for demolition. Attorney Estrada advised it would be the Town that would be seeking the bids for demolition, and he could do that on behalf of the Town.

Vice-Chairman Jerome stated this matter has gone on long enough, and the fact that the owner is not here is indicative of the attitude he has displayed the past 13-14 months. The owner has not moved the (junk) vehicles from this property. He was very late in getting a contractor who was concerned about starting last month, and he talked about "weather permitting." Vice-Chairman Jerome stated if you delay long enough, you are going to get winter. Some discussion ensued.

Chairman Ryfa suggested Attorney Estrada send a letter tomorrow to the property owner advising him the Town is going to pursue bids for demolition. Attorney Estrada advised the Statute requires notice be sent to the owner that the Town is going to pursue bids in 30 days. Before getting those bids, the Town must provide the property owner with notice. Some discussion ensued. Attorney Estrada advised the costs that the property owner would be responsible for would include attorney's fees, and any other Town costs, including demolition, that are related to it. The attorney's fees and those costs will go back to the beginning of this action, over 14 months ago. Attorney Estrada stated it is a large building, so it is going to be a pretty hefty fine against him. If the Committee will allow him, Attorney Estrada advised he would also inform the property owner that if there is demolition, the Town will put a lien on the property and will seek to get reimbursed through that lien. This will also allow the owner to know all the rights the Town has to pursue the demolition. Some discussion ensued.

Vice-Chairman Jerome made a motion to authorize Attorney Estrada notify the property owner of the Town's intent to seek bids for demolition on this property, the costs the property owner will be responsible for, and the Town's intent to put a lien on the property and will seek reimbursement for all costs through the lien.

Chief Schoon seconded the motion.

Discussion: Vice-Chairman Jerome asked if the Town's ordinance is in place that permits this type of action. Attorney Estrada advised yes; it is in place. The initial ordinance that created the Unsafe Building Committee adopted the Unsafe Building Law to properly allow for the bids and for this whole process to go. Vice-Chairman Jerome queried whether the bid requirements are appropriate for what the Committee wants. Attorney Estrada stated they have the process through the Statute. They have not fine-tuned the process for the Town yet through a bid packet, but they are close. Vice-Chairman Jerome asked if the Town Council needs to approve the wording of that bid packet. Attorney Estrada stated that approval falls under the auspice of this Committee.

The motion carried (4-0).




### 3. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Oscar Flores, stated he resides at 715 W. Miller St., and he wanted to know what the next step is regarding 715 W. Miller St. Chairman Ryfa stated that since there is a Demolition Order in place for this property, the Town will now seek bids for the demolition. Mr. Flores proceeded to speak of a female who lived in Apartment #10 and who had passed away last week. She had a hole in her shower and possibly mold in the apartment. Mr. Flores stated he believes Apartment #7 has mold in the carpeting and the restroom. Some discussion ensued. Chairman Ryfa stated the Town will be moving forward with the demolition, and they would have an update in 30 days. Attorney Estrada advised the Town must give the property owner 30-days notice of when the bids for demolition will be opened, which most likely will be in December.

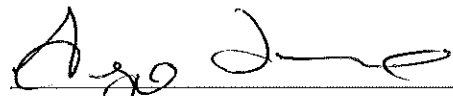
### 4. CLOSE

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 P.M.

### MEMBERS OF THE UNSAFE BUILDING COMMITTEE



Rick Ryfa, Chairman



George Jerome, Vice-Chairman

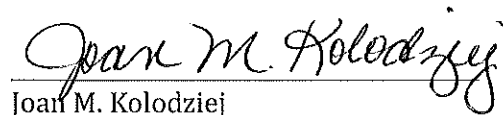


Greg Mance, Police Chief, Member



Roy Schoon, Fire Chief, Member

Prepared by:



Joan M. Kolodziej