

DPW Board Meeting, April 14th, 2015

Official minutes recorded by Nic Dovi

Meeting called to order at the NYS Armory on Wheeler Avenue in Cortland, NY by Chris Bistocchi at 6:31 PM

Present members:

Mike Doughty, Keith VanGorder, Cliff Kostuk, Abbey Withers and Pat O'Mara

Also present: Chris Bistocchi, Nic Dovi and Bill Knickerbocker from the City Code Office

Approval of minutes from meeting on 12/9/14

Motion by M. Doughty, seconded by C. Kostuk

All in favor – approved

Old business: None

New business:

1. Water grievances

Brief discussion in regards to the newspaper article that outlined tips and strategies that could be used as preventive measures for residents to alleviate their water services from freezing. Doughty, Bistocchi

14 Jewett Avenue

Upheld by Board. All in favor, with A. Withers abstaining from vote. No individuals were present to discuss, and the Board felt that the reasoning for an adjustment or overturning were unsubstantiated.

64 Church Street

Upheld by Board unanimously. No individuals were present to discuss and the board felt that the reasoning for an adjustment or overturning were unsubstantiated.

86 River Street

Upheld by Board unanimously. No individuals were present to discuss and the board felt that the reasoning for an adjustment or overturning were unsubstantiated.

221 Tompkins Street

Upheld by Board unanimously. No individuals were present to discuss and the board felt that the reasoning for an adjustment or overturning were unsubstantiated.

4 Yong Street

Board voted unanimously to adjust the bill to reflect the quarterly minimum usage that they have historically had during those months. This was due to the water main being installed many years prior at an insufficient depth. That depth caused the water main to freeze. The residents were present at the meeting and gave a description of the timeline and events surrounding the recent issues they had with their water.

37 North Church Street

Upheld by Board unanimously. No individuals were present to discuss and the Board felt that the reasoning for an adjustment or overturning were unsubstantiated.

105 Pendleton Street

Upheld by Board unanimously. No individuals were present to discuss and the Board felt that the reasoning for an adjustment or overturning were unsubstantiated.

89 Lincoln Avenue

Upheld by Board unanimously. No individuals were present to discuss and the Board felt that the reasoning for an adjustment or overturning were unsubstantiated.

Shoveled sidewalk Grievances

Brief discussion of process. M. Doughty voiced concerns with why this Board was actually tasked with hearing these types of violations. Bill Knickerbocker and Chris Bistocchi gave a collaborative explanation.

149 Tompkins Street

Board unanimously overturned due to lack of information. Amount of snow present in pictures did not substantiate cause for the Board to warrant City involvement.

145 Groton Avenue

Board unanimously overturned due to lack of information. Process for notification was discussed and questioned. Notification was sent to previous owner and never passed on to current owner of any problems. Residence changed hands almost eight months prior to the incident.

Suggestion by Nick Dovi that the Board recognizes the individuals that were in the audience that wanted to speak on their own behalf and the Board handle these grievances before those that were not present. Pat O'Mara agreed and the Board proceeded to tend to the grievances with representation first.

1 Parker Avenue

Resident spoke on her own behalf and cited personal issues and family illness as the reason not to have the snow removed promptly. Resident questioned the process of notification months prior to this offense. She stated that she was warned but these should be looked at as totally separate events, not as one. Keith VanGorder stated that he was in agreement that the notification process seemed flawed but wanted resident to know that personal issues like the ones she outlined are not a valid reason for overturning the charges.

All members voted in favor of overturning the charges because of notification issues that surrounded this incident.

51 Union Street

Resident Mike Stokie spoke on his own behalf. He advised the Board that he was in the process of selling the property and there was confusion in regards to the notification process. Contact may have been made to the tenant and not the property owner; there was simply a lack of concrete evidence.

Board unanimously overturned due to lack of information and reasonable doubt.

77 West Main Street

Owner spoke on his own behalf about his snow blower breaking down and how he cleared the walk multiple times during what he considered a large snow event. Pictures showed that the walk had been done at some point because of the large snow banks.

The Board unanimously ruled to overturn all charges because the amount of snow in the pictures was not significant enough to be a hazard.

General discussion between all Board members, Bill Knickerbocker and the audience on how the Board would need to actually uphold grievances of this type. Some ideas were a concentrated centralized format of documentation, pictures, notification that included times and dates as well as positive contact with property owners.

60 North Main Street

Property owner was not present. Board voted 4 to 1 (M. Doughty against) to uphold charges. O'Mara, Kostuk, Withers and VanGorder cited proper notification – pictures and documentation were utilized in this case by Code Officer Tom Tobin.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28

Motion by M. Doughty, Seconded by C. Kostuk