

Memorandum

To: Bryan Heck, City Manger

From: Shannon Meadows, Community Development Director

CC: Chief Allison Elliott
Chief Jacob King
Steve Thompson, Deputy Community Development Director
Brandon Gill, Chief Building Official
Kim Fultz, Code Enforcement Manager

Date: August 16, 2023

RE: Declaration of Public Nuisance: Former Villager Inn located at 1715 West North Street

At 11:49 PM on August 15, I received a call from Police and Fire Dispatch notifying me of an active fire at the Former Villager Inn. I then received a call from Assistant Fire Chief Matthew Smith at 12:05 AM notifying me of the same. At 7:30AM on August 16, I joined Fire Chief King and Chief Building Official Gill at the site to review the damage and assess the property. Upon arrival, it is clear that the facility has sustained significant damage, both from the fire and also from trespassers, vandals, and nefarious activities that have been ongoing at the site over a short amount of time.

The facility as it now exists is a public nuisance.

Chapter 1323.01 describes a public nuisance in the City of Springfield as, among other things; any yard, land or lot . . . building, structure . . . or part thereof which will cause hurt, harm, discomfort, damage or injury to the public or to any considerable number of persons in the City by reason of:

- Being detrimental to the general health of the community –
The site presents a detrimental risk to general health of the community. The facility has been vandalized and has endured a two alarm fire. The facility is a set of interconnected as well as disconnected structures that have been ransacked and left unsecured. There is evidence of windows being broken and shot out. Ceilings have been destroyed and pipe chases have been removed. Contents of interior rooms have been vandalized and items stolen. There is significant evidence of squatters using the facility for unlawful purposes. Mechanical systems are compromised. Springfield Police made arrests on August 15 around 4:48PM including persons with outstanding warrants being found at the site and persons in possession of methamphetamines. Since April there have been calls for service at the site including calls for burglary, suspicious activity, vandalism, trespass, and other concerns. A copy of the Record List, showing the calls has been added to this memo. The reuse of the facility has been significantly limited at this point. There is no effective or efficient means to secure the site to prevent additional risk to public and first responder health and safety.

- Being a fire hazard –
The facility endured a two alarm fire over the night of August 15 and into the morning of August 16. Springfield Fire Rescue Division Fire Marshall’s office has conducted the investigation of the fire and will provide additional information to supplement this notification of declaration of public nuisance as soon as the official fire report record is finalized. In addition to the supplemental report information that will be provided, Chief King submitted a memorandum from his office to myself and Chief Elliott. This has also been included as a supplement to this memorandum.
- Being unsafe for occupancy, or use –
The facility is unsafe and cannot be occupied. A complete rebuild would be necessary before legal occupancy could be considered.
- Being an attractive nuisance to children –
The site is located within a business corridor, and near residential neighborhoods. The site is not secure and children can access the facility and the dangers present. The facility is large and hosts many opportunities for seclusion and hiding. There is evidence of trespass and squatting at the site. Children are at risk both from the conditions of the structure, and the risk of nefarious activities that may be occurring or could occur. Springfield Police as well as Springfield Fire Rescue cannot access the full perimeter of the site by vehicle. Access must be had by foot to fully assess the facility. As such, emergency response – as well as surveillance of safe conditions – is limited. There is no fire alarm notification system present at the site. If an additional emergency occurs, response will be delayed – putting children who find the site an attractive nuisance at significant risk.
- Lack of reasonable or adequate maintenance of structures, and ground, causing deterioration and blighting influence –
The site has endured significant damage due to vandalism and nefarious activities over a very short amount of time. The facility poses a blight to surrounding neighbors and businesses.
- Having a condition which violates a provision of any building Codes –
Chapter 109.4 of the Ohio Building Code, *Unsafe Buildings*, states: Structures or existing equipment that are unsafe or unsanitary due to inadequate means of egress, inadequate light and ventilation, *or which constitute a fire hazard, or are otherwise dangerous to human life*, shall be *deemed a serious hazard*. Where a building is found to be a serious hazard, such hazard shall be eliminated or the building shall be vacated, and where such building, when vacated, remains a serious hazard, it shall be razed.

I have convened Chief King of the Springfield Fire Rescue Division, Chief Building Official Gill and Code Enforcement Manager Fultz. A full review of the property has been conducted. In addition to the group above, I have conferred with Assistant Fire Chief and Fire Marshall Leciejewski as well as Assistant Chief Smith. I have also coordinated with Police Chief Elliott and Captain Williams. Per Chapter 1323.03 the coordinated efforts among Community Development and Springfield Police, as well as Springfield Fire Rescue has been completed, and we have determined the site to be a Public Nuisance. We recommend immediate action be taken to abate the Nuisance and protect the health, safety and welfare of the community.

I have directed the Chief Building Official to post the site as an Unsafe Building per Ohio Building Code Chapter 109.4 and have advised both Springfield Fire Rescue and Springfield Police of this posting.

Per Chapter 1323.05 the Chief Building Official and Code Enforcement Manager have both determined that the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the City are threatened by the conditions that have been created at this site, and the continuation of these conditions. It is further determined that the public nuisance needs to be removed immediately to prevent injury to the life and/or property of the residents of the City and to first responders from Springfield Fire Rescue, Springfield Police, and Community Development.

This memorandum is delivered to the City Manager per Chapter 1323.05 as a presentation of facts surrounding the determination of the public nuisance and recommendation for immediate removal as an emergency action. It is recommended that the City Manager cause the immediate demolition of the structures present at the site.



Shannon Meadows <smeadows@springfieldohio.gov>

1715 W North Street

1 message

Jacob King <jking@springfieldohio.gov>

Wed, Aug 16, 2023 at 1:09 PM

To: Shannon Meadows <smeadows@springfieldohio.gov>

Cc: Allison Elliott <aelliott@springfieldohio.gov>, Brian Leciejewski <bleciejewski@springfieldohio.gov>

Team,

I wanted to provide you with an update following our earlier discussion today regarding the assessment of 1715 W North St.

Upon careful inspection, evaluation, and review of the property, it has become glaringly evident that this facility presents a critical life, health, and safety concern for both the community and our valued first responders. Consequently, I find it necessary to formally declare the facilities at this address a public nuisance.

Drawing upon my professional expertise as Fire Chief, it is my considered opinion that immediate action must be taken to address the situation at 1715 W North St. This action is imperative to prevent potential harm to the lives and property of our fellow residents within the City. I base this declaration on the specific definition of a Public Nuisance, *which encompasses a building that poses a threat to public health, welfare, or safety. This includes structures that are structurally compromised, unsanitary, lacking proper safe egress, constituting fire hazards, or no longer fit and habitable. Additionally, buildings that create hazards due to inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, obsolescence, or abandonment also fall under this definition.*

The conditions at 1715 W North St undeniably meet several criteria outlined in the definition. The absence of adequate safe egress, the existence of fire hazards, and the overall state of disrepair render the facilities unfit and hazardous. The impact of vandalism has further exacerbated the situation, leading to the improper storage of items that contribute to a considerable fire load in areas unsuitable for such storage. Compounding matters, the buildings remain unsecured due to broken windows and doors, allowing unauthorized access by citizens engaging in destructive behavior, hoarding, and even inhabiting uninhabitable spaces.

I wish to clarify the gravity of the situation by highlighting the risks our department faces when responding to emergencies at this location. The need to search the complex for missing or injured individuals presents a substantial threat to the safety of our firefighters, potentially resulting in grave injuries or even fatalities.

In conclusion, I firmly stand by my declaration and professional opinion that the facilities at 1715 W North St constitute a public nuisance that demands immediate attention. I am committed to the safety and well-being of our community, first responders and I am dedicated to taking the necessary steps to address this matter promptly.

Thank you for your understanding and support in this crucial endeavor.

Respectfully,

Jacob King, Fire Chief
Springfield Fire Rescue Division
350 N. Fountain Avenue
Springfield, Ohio 45504

Cell: 937-900-7047
Office: 937-324-7600
Fax: 937-324-4810

Record List - Total:18

CallID	When Reported	Typ	Nature	P	Location	Cty
23-013314	22:17:14 04/09/23	I	BURGLARY	3	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-017443	08:30:08 04/21/23	I	SUSP	3	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-020767	17:55:18 05/01/23	I	SUSP	3	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-039677	18:48:11 06/20/23	I	SUSP	3	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-040851	19:55:27 06/23/23	I	PERSUSP	4	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-044573	12:49:38 07/03/23	I	TROUBLE	3	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-046959	20:06:44 07/09/23	I	SUSP	3	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-047111	10:04:51 07/10/23	I	PARKING	6	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-047878	10:51:13 07/12/23	I	BURGLARY	3	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-047932	13:24:42 07/12/23	I	BURGLARY	3	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-050466	14:02:32 07/19/23	I	BURGLARY	3	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-051040	04:17:17 07/21/23	I	TSTOP	2	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-053062	16:10:23 07/26/23	I	VANDAL	4	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-055182	00:21:07 08/01/23	I	ADMIN	6	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-056112	16:07:17 08/03/23	I	SUSP	3	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-060351	16:07:39 08/15/23	I	TRESPASS	4	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-060461	23:30:42 08/15/23	If	FAPT	1	1715 W NORTH ST	SFD
23-020272	00:44:34 04/30/23	I	SUSP	3	1715 W NORTH ST; VILLAGER INN	SFD