

BLIGHT COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday September 19, 2017 6:30pm

A Blight Commission Meeting was held on Tuesday, September 19, 2017 in the selectmen's conference room.

Members present: First Selectman Michael Criss, Selectman Evan Brunetti, Selectwoman Nancy Schnyer (absent with previous notice), Blight Officer Tom Mitchell, Betsy Bosco, Bob Barry

Call to Order

Mr. Criss called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm.

Discuss current Reports on existing complaints - Follow up on 3 existing Blighted properties.

- **56 Brookfield Road**: Certified letter was sent on June 8th 2017 with a compliance date of August 7th 2017. The certified letter was not accepted or picked up at the post office by the resident. As a result, the 60 day compliant period will start the day the letter was finally accepted by Mr. Skibisky on July 26th 2017. The compliant 60 day period will end on September 24th 2017. Mr. Mitchell will keep the file updated with ongoing correspondence. Today's day is day 55 in the 60 day compliant period. Mr. Mitchell drove by the property on September 8th noticing that both tarps that have been covering the garage door have been removed. It appears a newer tarp is replaced over one of the missing garage doors. Mr. Mitchell also noted in the file and read: 'As of today's date there has been no correspondence from Mr. Skibisky. This is currently day 55 from signing for the Blight letter. Request for next step at September 19th Blight Meeting.' Mr. Barry made a motion to write a letter to Mr. Skibisky, send it certified (if he doesn't pick it up, hand deliver with a Trooper present to be a witness), that he is to provide us in writing his written plan of action (including a timeline) to amend the Blight issues. If we do not receive the written plan within 15 days of receipt of the letter, then he will be subjected to the next step of the Blight Ordinance which will be outlined in the letter. Mr. Criss seconded. Ms. Bosco not in favor. Mr. Brunetti abstained. Motion carries.
- **8 Ridgewood Drive**: Mr. Brunetti made a motion to table this complaint until further information on the fire that took place. Mr. Barry seconded. All were in favor. Motion carries.
- **42 South Shore Road**: Complaint says stack of wood pallets, overgrown lawn, tall weeds and broken windows on shed. Mr. Mitchell's notes state: 'On August 14th I went to 42 South Shore Road in Harwinton to view the property as a Blight complaint had been received for the address. Upon viewing the property, it is this Blight Enforcement Officers recommendation that this complaint be found unsubstantiated. I saw nothing with the house or property that would indicate blight and does not meet criteria set by the Blight Ordinance.' Mr. Brunetti made

a motion to send a letter to the complainant stating that the property has not been deemed Blight by the Commission. Ms. Bosco seconded. All in favor. Motion carries.

- **63 South Shore Road**: Mr. Mitchell read his notes: 'Original letter mailed June 8th, not accepted from the mail carrier or picked up from the post office from property owner. Letter returned to Town all. Called and spoke with Peter Finley on 7/14/17 regarding accepting the letter. It was had delivered to Mrs. Finley by this Blight Enforcement officer 8/6/17. Spoke with Peter Finley on 9/5/17 when he called me to inform that he would be removing one of the junk vehicles from the property as well as a pick-up truck bed and any junk. Peter Finley communicated that the 1 unregistered truck will remain on the property as allowed. Other materials located on property are roof shingles that will be going on the roof of the house as 63 South Shore Drive and a press brake machine that he is refinishing. Peter Finley said he would have this completed by the time allotted. I thanked Peter for his attention to the matter and asked him to contact me when he was finished so I could check it.' Mr. Barry made a motion for Mr. Mitchell to follow up with Mr. Finley to make sure that he is compliant and on track as he promised and everything is taken care of in the time line allotted and that he stays in communication with the Commission. Mr. Brunetti seconded. All in favor. Motion carries.
- **251 Wildcat Hill Road**: Mr. Mitchell read the letter that serves as documentation of the updated status of the property. 'After receiving the registered letter notifying home owners that the property has been deemed Blight, Mr. Earnest Petrovits called to say that he would be having leg surgery on June 19th and would like to request an extension. Mr. Petrovits was directed to follow the instructions he received which directs to him communicate via letter. Since that time, Mr. Petrovits did not submit this earlier. He asked for extended through letter communication. I called him on July 16th to inform him that his 60 days had expired and he did not submit a written request for the extension, he stated he didn't know he had to send a letter. Mr. Petrovits also stated that he has started cleaning up and has gotten rid of two vehicles and a boat.' Since that correspondence took place, Mr. Petrovits did send an email requesting explaining the situation and what he has done. Mr. Petrovits also requested someone to accompany him on his property to go over exactly what needed to be done. Mr. Mitchell made several attempts to call Mr. Petrovits to go over the specifics of what needs to be done on the property and to date hasn't heard anything. On September 16th Mr. Mitchell drove past the property and noticed that many vehicles were no longer there. There are approximately 6 junk vehicles left on the property and 18 was the number when we started. There has been significant progress. Ms. Bosco asked how long the extension was. The extension is 30 days. We can determine a 30 day extension if he is making progress. He hasn't given us a real plan yet on how he is going to go about cleaning up the property. Ms. Bosco asked, 'Is it 30 days to initiate change or 30 days to complete change?' Mr. Brunetti made a motion to grant him the extension and ask for a plan via a letter asking Mr. Petrovits that he supply the Board with a written plan and deadline date of when he will have the property cleaned up. And also that the Board does see that there is progress on the property so we will grant a 30 day extension. If we do not hear from him within

the 30 days we would ask that the Blight Officer proceed to the next step of the Blight Ordinance. Ms. Bosco seconded. All in favor. Motion carries.

Executive Session – New complaints were discussed.

- **6 Timber Lane:** Mr. Criss read the letter accompanying the complaint: ‘My name is Adrianna Tine and I am a real estate agent with William Ravis Real Estate. I listed Celine & Glen York’s home for sale on 8 Timber Lane in Harwinton on May 13th 2017. The York’s property is meticulously maintained and is priced to sell. The feedback that I have received from prospective buyers has been positive about the York’s home, but has not been favorable about the house next door on 6 Timber Lane. Potential buyers have stated more than once that the house next door is in very bad condition and looks terrible and is the reason they are not interested in my client’s home. I have witnessed for myself at open houses where 5 or 6 cars drive by my open house and once they see the house at 6 Timber Lane they keep driving. There’s no doubt in my mind that the condition of this house on 6 Timber Lane is the reason we have not been able to sell the York’s home, nobody wants to live next door to a blighted house.’ The home itself is in disrepair, holes in siding, peeling paint. The perimeter of the home is cluttered with boat, fencing and miscellaneous trash. A plow is in the front yard, a dog pen in the back is surrounded by more clutter, things that should be contained in a shed or garage; several complaints from visiting people and prospective buyers. Property is owned by Wayne Trauskauskus. This was filed by Celine and Glen York of 8 Timber Lane. Complaint accompanied by photos taken by the complainant. Siding considered damaged and the other condition is the excess debris. Ms. Bosco made the motion for Mr. Mitchell to investigate the property further before deeming it blight. Mr. Brunette seconded. All were in favor. Motion carries.
- **30 Breezy Hill Road:** Torrington Area Health went out there to tell them to fix their septic. Family is destitute and the house is lopsided. Torrington Area Health has raised an action against them on the swimming pool. The pool has been abandoned for years. Mr. Mitchell asked if Torrington Area Health is acting on it, are we allowed to act on it as well? We can act on it as well on the other separate items. This complaint was sent by numerous neighbors, a petition was sent out. Got a complaint from just about every neighbor. Mr. Criss read the main complaint: ‘The numerous complaints about the unkempt property at 30 Breezy Hill Road. Shortly after moving into the home, (which is next door to the blighted property – Phyllis Rylas) several neighbors told of the complaints and their dissatisfaction of the home’s deterioration. Nothing was done. My neighbors and I therefore signed a petition and wrote a complaint letter for our First Selectman. Now that we have an official Blight Ordinance, we are trying again to get this home cleaned up within a designated time frame. Enough is enough. Below are the items of the most concern, which I hope gets rectified rather quickly, rather than later. Basement windows are broken at present, plastic type window which the neighbors three cats consistently run in and out of, a bunch of junk was placed in front of the window to keep the cats secure and safe inside. I’ve witnessed rats running from the side of their home towards my home. Additionally there is a whole in the home on the right side of the attic area where

there have been birds' nests and birds coming in and out of the attic area; I witnessed that for almost the last 4 years. There's persistent debris on the property, absolutely – back, front and side yard. About a year ago the owners left garbage containers near the road for 24/7, sometimes the tops blow off and open garbage bags have garbage flying throughout the neighborhood. Thankfully none have blown out into the road. It is a matter of time before that occurs. Overgrown brush weeds and grass consistent on the property. The front yard was finally weed wacked over 3 weeks ago. Some areas weeded, however the weeds pulled were thrown into piles in the front yard near the street and some are in a wheel barrow. The piles are still there. There's junk in the front yard and the left side of the home, this should be cleaned up. Gas cans, bikes, dirt bikes, numerous bicycles, sometimes garbage bags until they are thrown into a garbage container. A motorboat sits on the front lawn which has now been moved to the backyard with a torn tarp on it, and it is an eyesore. The boat is inoperable, unregistered since 2000 and just sits there. Next to the boat are some tire truck rims that have been sitting there, I'm not sure what they are there for. Additionally there is a small unregistered black car sitting in the driveway for over three years. Because of that car in the driveway, they are very often parking on the front lawn or fairly close to the road way which interferes with my sight lines. The backyard harbors a mess such as un-useable, torn storage shed type thing that has grown weeds in it and a bunch of junk thrown there, serves no purpose. The rickety fence around the in-ground pool is completely demolished at the back of it, against the law. Since there is no fence now, the pool area is disgusting. Over 2 years ago I spoke to the homeowner, Brian Miller, of his uprooted trees that bent over towards my yard; all the trees bend towards the south, but he did nothing. There is a safety issue that is mentioned in the ordinance but no law on the trees yet – this needs to be added, these trees are dead and lean over onto other trees. If one hits me or my dogs or my granddaughter there will be one heck of a lawsuit against the owner. My daughter and her boyfriend move the trees off of my property onto the owners property where they still lie. He hasn't thrown them into the woods, doesn't mow near his trees nor weeds. I am pushing 68 years old and maintain my lawn.' She has been verbally assaulted by Brian Miller and had State Troopers there numerous times because of him calling me an (vulgarity) and his wife when I politely told her that one of her dogs, which I am positive are not registered and get loose often and keep messing in my yard. I hope something will be done to now eliminate some of the problems on Breezy Hill Road. A motion was made by Mr. Brunetti to have Mr. Mitchell investigate the property to deem it blight. Mr. Barry Seconded. All were in favor. Motion carries.

Adjournment – Mr. Criss made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:46pm. Mr. Brunetti Seconded. All were in Favor. Motion carried.

Minutes submitted by _____
Jen Minery