Town of Corinth Selectboard
PO Box 461
Corinth, VT 05039

Approved Minutes of Selectboard Special Meeting
April 01, 2025

Attending for the Board: Chair Holly Groschner, Carl Demrow, Stephen Devoto.

Members of the public: Darren LaHaye (179 Rte 25, West Topsham), Katharine Lea (Building Safety Officer, 513 Huffington), KellyAnn Donahue (Lister, Administrative Officer, 846 Village Road),

Board Chair Groschner called the meeting to order at 6:41PM.

Groschner said this was a public hearing to consider an appeal of a dilapidated building's order that was issued February 11. Groschner asked the members of the public to state their name and address for the record (above).

Groschner said the order was issued to Frank and Peggy Bowen, whose address appears as the owner of the property on the tax bill at the date of the order, and noted as appellants, they were not present.

LaHaye explained that he had paid for the property with a cashier's check, and this has been noted in the town records, but the new deed has not been recorded. He confirmed that he was one of the parties that signed the notice of appeal for this hearing.

Groschner reviewed the history of the dilapidated building order and the appeal. There was an inspection of the property on January 22, this was noticed by certified mailing. Present at the inspection was Lea and John Saken. Frank and Peggy Bowen were not present. Lea submitted a dilapidated building order on February 11th, and sent it by certified mail to Frank and Peggy Bowen. The Bowens phoned Lea after receiving the report, and filed an appeal of the order on March 13th, this hearing is within the 30 day window required by statute. The certified mail notice for this hearing was sent on March 28.

Lea noted that the order had a deadline of March 17 for all repairs to be completed. LaHaye said that he has not moved forward with repairs until the deed is straightened out. He said he has done quite a bit of work to it already, including putting all the reinforcement of skirting and pressure treated wood around the bottom with Typar. He has jacked and leveled the complete trailer up with new cinder blocks that were needed. He has pulled a lot of the insulation out of the bottom over the concern people have that it has been flooded. He said it hasn't flooded in 40 years. A plumber went under there. He offered to show pictures.
Groschner asked if the siding has been repaired. LaHaye said he would not any more until getting the deed, he noted that some of the stuff is already stacked up at my shop.

Groschner reviewed the condition of the trailer as depicted in photographs, which formed the basis of the order. Lea confirmed that on January 22nd, there was sheathing, siding, and insulation not secured, these materials were on site. The

foundation was exposed and animals had been under there, based on footprints in the snow. She said that from the perspective of the dilapidated building ordinance, it was clear that animals and intruders could enter, and there were hazardous materials on the site. She identified the hazardous materials as propane tanks and a car battery. LaHaye expressed the opinion that empty, small propane tanks were not hazardous materials.

Devoto asked about the statement in the order, "The mobile home has been badly damaged by floods…" Lea said that the damage may have been caused by the fire, instead of flooding. Lea said she did not see evidence that the foundation was structurally unsound. She said it was uninhabitable because of the sheathing condition and the wall conditions, but could be habitable with repairs.

Mr. LeHaye said he was not given a copy of the building safety order. He responded to the questions about flood damage by saying first that there was no fire, and then showing photos from a trapper and a plumber, which he said showed no silt washed under the trailer. He said the only thing the building needs is insulation and the siding put back on, which he does not want to do until the deed is straightened out.

One of the photographs says that the trailer was manufactured by the Skyline Corporation, and its date was October 18th, 1988, its vehicle ID number is 2216-0496 Y. Other photographs show the underside of a mobile home that Mr. LeHaye testified is the mobile home in question in the building safety order. Groschner, Demrow, and Devoto agreed there was no water damage or fire damage visible in the photos. Lea said the fire damage was on the exterior side. Lea agreed with LeHaye that the trailer was in really good shape

Groschner said that the order suggests that repairs could be made, the mobile home could be removed, the hazardous materials, if any, could be removed. She said the select board needed to to determine, first of all, whether the mobile home is dilapidated under the order. Groschner listed the reasons given in the ordinance for being considered dilapidated: structural integrity, deteriorated from deferred maintenance or neglect, has been damaged by fire, wind, flood, weather, or impact. She suggested it may qualify as dilapidated because of the explosion that took off the siding and exposed the insulation. She felt it is not reasonably secured because of the access underneath and the open garage door. And lastly, any flammable liquid or substances or hazardous or toxic materials have been unsafely or unlawfully stored. Devoto pointed out that the Select Board could uphold or overturn the building safety order in whole or in part and may make additional requirements or modifications. Devoto said he would not qualify propane tanks as hazardous material, Demrow and Groschner agreed. The board agreed that it was not reasonably secured against unauthorized entry and that would be a grounds for considering it to be dilapidated. The Select Board agreed that it would uphold the order on the basis that the building is dilapidated due to some damage and access.

Groschner suggested that since the deadline in the order for fixing the issues has passed, a remedy could be the assessment of a fine. The initial fine can be up to $300, with a daily fine of up to $100. Groschner suggested assigning a fine to the Bowens of $300. Demrow said the Board has discretion and suggested a fine of $100. Devoto agreed with Demrow.

Groschner suggested that until there is confirmation of the ownership, the property would sit with a $100 penalty on it, recorded in the land records. And it will sit as a dilapidated building. The remedy for which would be repair. Groschner explained to Mr. LeHaye that any repair on the building would require Planning Commission approval because it is

subject to the flood hazard bylaw, because it is in the state regulated flood hazard zone. And to meet that standard, he would need a permit from the state and a variance from the Planning Commission.

There was further discussion about the state and local regulations regarding building and repairs in flood zones.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10.