



Demolition Request Site Visit Summary

Date: July 22, 2022, at 8:00 a.m.

Location: 18456 Woodland Meadows Drive, Wildwood, MO 63038 (Locator #25X520021)

Ward: One

Commission

Attendance: Vice-Chair Scott, Commissioners Hrubes and Rowton, Secretary Bachert, Alternate Quarternik, Council Liaisons Nyhan and Rambaud, and Chair Stevens

Staff

Attendance: Planner Keefe

Others in

Attendance: Council Member Clark (Ward One)

Discussion: Mike Whalen, leasee of the property and owner of Whalen Custom Homes, thanked the Commission for attending the visit and explained the demolition request, noting the Theiss House and all accessory structures were being requested for removal. He stated that Mr. Theiss had taken care of the house up until the time he became ill. The house has deteriorated since, and the family came to a settlement agreement that involved the sale of it to Mr. Whalen, which is currently pending.

Mr. Whalen is currently maintaining the property and assuming liability for it. He noted that ten (10) dumpsters had been needed to haul away trash and debris. The property has attracted vandalism, since the passing of Mr. Theiss. Members noted the property was very nicely mowed.

Both exterior and interior review of the primary structure took place. Outside the home, many of the architectural features were missing, and personal debris remained on the front porch of the residence, including an entire series of *The Twilight Zone*. The path to the front door was missing some steps. Inside, there was a cherry wood handrail that Mr. Whalen noted was not to code, but many members commented on it as “beautiful.” Inside the first room to the left was a piano. Trash and personal effects littered the floors. Wallpaper and drywall were peeling in most places. There was some nice woodwork on the doors and baseboards that a couple members noted should be salvaged. The stairs to the attic were sturdy, and the attic had various personal artifacts in it.

Council Liaison Rambaud went into the basement and noted that there were round pine logs that looked worse for wear holding up the foundation with misshapen stone walls. It appeared dry. There was a small workshop. He noted that, if the building could not be restored, the pine logs might be salvaged and useful for City projects.

Mr. Whalen noted that most of the trees were to be preserved with the proposed development, which includes thirteen (13) large lots, most beyond three (3) acres. He would like to keep the corbels on the exterior of the structure but is open to donating the rest of the architectural elements to the City or to an organization that salvages or recycles them. When asked if he was interested in saving the house, Mr. Whalen stated he believed to do so would be dangerous, with it having problems with asbestos and termites.

Council Liaison Rambaud noted that well placement was an important consideration and could impact surrounding properties, if not designed a specific way. Mr. Whalen noted he would follow all laws regulating well installation and consult his engineers on the topic.

Upon discussion of the historic structure, Vice Chair Scott noted he would like to see the house preserved, if possible. He recommended the Historic Preservation Commission table any further discussion on the topic, requesting instead that Mr. Whalen bring back additional information on the salvageability of the house and financial feasibility of doing so. Mr. Whalen noted he would have his architect do a forensic investigation into the salvageability of the home and provide a report. He noted that it would be very difficult to restore the home to a dwelling, but that preserving a portion of it as an accessory structure could be considered. Vice Chair Scott made a motion to table discussion to another meeting and have Mr. Whalen bring back additional information. Commissioner Rowton seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Vice Chair Scott motioned to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:30 a.m. Commissioner Hrubes seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.