

**Board of Health
Special Meeting and Public Hearing Minutes
December 19, 2013**

Members Present:

Tom Kinzer, Co-Chair
Kevin Wormstead
Anita Raj

Staff Present:

Heidi Porter, Director
Mary Firestone, Recording Secretary

Also attending:

Diane Page, 13 Walsh Road

The special meeting was called to order at 7:12 P.M. Mr. Kinzer chaired.

Ms. Porter explained the events which occasioned the present meeting. Community Health Nurse Joyce Cheng had met Ms. Page at the Council on Aging and had conversations with her relatives and acquaintances who related that there were some issues about her house including an intense odor emanating from within. Although requests had been made, Ms. Page refused admittance to Board of Health personnel. On Sunday, December 15, Ms. Porter received a call from the Bedford Police Department; Ms. Page had called 911 at 5:00 A.M. when storm damage to her roof resulted in water entering her dining room. The police reported that she had been transported from her house to the emergency room at Emerson Hospital. Ms. Porter had called Chris Laskey, Bedford Code Enforcement Director, and both decided that an inspection of the residence was necessary. Ms. Page, still in the Emerson Hospital emergency room, gave Ms. Porter permission to enter the house. Ms. Page herself was unable to return home and had arranged to stay with relatives. On Monday, December 16, 2013 at 9:00 am, Ms. Porter, Ms. Cheng and Mr. Laskey entered Ms. Page's home where they found an excessive accumulation of materials, debris, rubbish and garbage, up to a depth of 3 feet, an overpowering odor, structural concerns and a significant plumbing problem. Ms. Porter advised that the house should be declared not suitable for habitation and the property should be condemned.

Ms. Page said that she cannot argue about the condition of the house; however she would like to go in and retrieve personal items.

Ms. Porter said that it is not necessary to padlock the house but that she would post a notice that access to the interior is prohibited without BOH permission. She said that Ms. Page could enter for a very short period of time but that a biohazard cleanup company would first have to clear paths. A constable had delivered a letter from Ms. Porter to Ms. Page who is currently residing at the Bedford Motel. On Tuesday, Ms. Porter met with Ms. Cheng, Officer Kristen Dineen, and representatives from Minuteman Senior Services and the Bedford Council on Aging. Ms. Page, her brother and sister-in-law were also present. They spoke of future housing for Ms. Page and disposition of the house. Counseling was discussed with the Youth and Family Services department.

Ms. Page said that she had put the house up for sale today as a tear-down. She said that it is her own fault. She said, "There is no one to blame but myself."

Ms. Page said that Officer Dineen would take her to the house and give her 15 minutes to retrieve her belongings. Ms. Porter said that she could not take cardboard boxes or other porous materials from the house.

Mr. Kinzer said that a time frame needs to be set. A formal declaration that the house is not habitable can be made along with issuance of a notice of condemnation, with a short term given for provision for removal of belongings.

Ms. Page said that some things could be cleaned and sent to consignment. Ms. Porter said that it is dangerous to be in the house and she would prefer that removal be done by a worker, probably suited up in protective clothing. Mr. Kinzer suggested, "selected items to be removed by someone qualified to work in a hazardous environment."

Mr. Kinzer declared a public hearing opened.

Ms. Page said that movers would be needed to get out the washer and dryer. Ms. Porter said that regular movers cannot go in because the house will be posted as condemned. Mr. Wormstead said that the washer and dryer will probably go with the sale of the house.

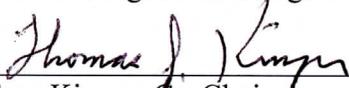
Ms. Porter said that she will work with Code Enforcement concerning the utilities. The water has already been turned off. The order will continue to cover the property after the sale, pre-demolition.

Mr. Wormstead said, "I move that the Board of Health declare that the house at 13 Walsh Road is unfit for human habitation and that the Board is issuing an order of condemnation." Ms. Raj seconded the motion. During the Discussion phase of the hearing, Mr. Kinzer again asked whether Ms. Page had anything more to tell the Board or to support her house not being condemned. She said she did not. Mr. Kinzer stated "It has been moved and seconded" and called for a vote. Vote count: 3-0. Mr. Kinzer declared the vote unanimous. Mr. Wormstead invited Ms. Page to speak. Ms. Page said, "I didn't come to defend the undefendable." Mr. Wormstead said that he was glad that she came and that there are people to help.

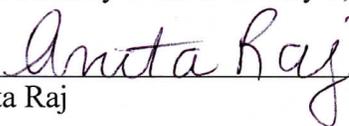
Ms. Porter said that she will post both the front and the back doors of the house and will confirm that the doors are locked.

Ms. Raj moved to close the public hearing. Vote count 3-0. Mr. Wormstead moved to adjourn the special meeting; Ms. Raj seconded the motion. Vote count: 3-0.

The next regular meetings of the Board will take place on January 6 and February 3, 2014



Tom Kinzer, Co-Chair



Anita Raj



Kevin Wormstead