

CITY OF KALAMAZOO DANGEROUS BUILDINGS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2005

Introduction

The Dangerous Buildings Board (DBB) is a seven member, quasi-judicial citizen body with responsibilities and authority derived from Chapter 9, Article VII of the Kalamazoo Code of Ordinances. Staff in the Community Planning and Development Department provides clerical support, case management, liaison, and recording services for this board. Structures with defects or violations making them "dangerous" are subject to hearings before the DBB. Beginning in 2003, most properties come to the DBB through the Anti-Blight Team with significant enforcement histories. After a public hearing to determine the facts of the matter, the DBB may determine that the structure was not or is no longer dangerous or blighted or may order that the property be brought into compliance by the owner or by the City. Compliance may be achieved by demolition or repair. Appeals from any DBB action may be brought before the Circuit Court within 21 (twenty-one) days of that action.

In 2005, the Dangerous Building Board (DBB) finally achieved full membership with the addition of two new members. All seven of these citizens volunteered for appointment and serve without financial compensation, except for reimbursement of parking costs. The cases heard by the DBB are often complex, balancing the stated interests and evident abilities of the property owner with the more subjective interests of the block, neighborhood, community, and City of Kalamazoo. Each case is also unique and its condition and status are quite fluid. The members who serve on the Dangerous Building Board are well deserving of the appreciation felt by the City and its citizens

Previous Year Summary

In 2004 the DBB met eleven times and one meeting was cancelled due to lack of quorum. There were 42 hearings and 9 re-hearings. The Board ordered blight abatement repair of 34 structures and demolition of 8 properties. There were no appeals to Circuit Court related to 2003 DBB actions.

Current Year Meetings and Decisions

In 2005, the DBB met eight (8) times and failed to make quorum four times. Owners of twenty-eight (28) properties received notice of buildings deemed to be dangerous. DBB hearings were not necessary for five properties whose owners provided an acceptable response including a timely compliance schedule. There were twenty-three (23) property hearings and six (6) re-hearings with a total of twenty-nine (29) decisions rendered, and action on two properties continued into the next year. Repairs were ordered for twelve (12) properties and fourteen (14) were ordered to be demolished. One order was for raze or repair. There were no appeals to Circuit Court for 2004 DBB decisions. The raze orders included nine houses, three residential garages, and two commercial structures.

Status of Projects Previously Reported to the City Commission

Eight demolitions are completed and the remaining six are under City contract for demolition in March 2006. Repairs are complete or nearly complete at all twelve properties.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenn Hartmann, Anti-Blight Inspector and DBB Liaison

Revised 02-27-06