

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOARD MEMBERS

Milton Reed, President
Richard Trembczynski, Vice-President
Thomas Davis, Member

Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 23, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Reported by Fissinger & Associates, Ltd.
By: Peggy S. LaLonde

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Present: Milton Reed, Richard Trembczynski,
Thomas Davis

Staff Present: Olga Cosme, Recording Secretary
Richard Morrisroe

MR. REED: Call to order the regular
meeting of the Board of Public Safety, January 23, 2023.
Need a Motion to approve the minutes
of January 9, 2023 as written.

MR. TREMBCZYNSKI: Make a motion.

MR. DAVIS: Second.

MR. REED: Properly moved and second.
Hearing no questions, we'll take a vote. All in favor?
(All signify aye.)

MR. REED: Motion carries.
Is there a motion to adopt
Resolution 2023-07, 4852 Tod Avenue and Release of Lien?

MR. TREMBCZYNSKI: Make a motion.

MR. DAVIS: Second.

MR. REED: Properly moved and second.
Hearing no questions, we'll take a vote. All in favor?
(All signify aye.)

MR. REED: Motion carries.

1 Next is New Business, so we'll turn
2 this over to the Building Department.

3 MR. PORTALTIN: Good evening,
4 Commissioners. James Portalatin, East Chicago Building
5 Commissioner. We have several properties here and I'm
6 going to go down the line.

7 First is 5013 Alexander is a garage.
8 Owner listed as Dorthea May Dicks. Photos show garage
9 and the roof in disrepair, missing soffits and facia,
10 boarded over windows. The owner was present here and
11 does know that we are going to enter a demolition order
12 on the property and they want to participate in the
13 50/50 program for the garage.

14 1802 Broadway, rear. Owner listed
15 as Reliable Real Estate Northwest Indiana, Inc.. Photos
16 show -- this is a brick commercial structure -- falling
17 bricks with rear windows boarded up, loose veneer and
18 missing mortar and brick throughout the building.
19 Rooftop has visible holes in the tar covering it. As
20 you are approaching the edge of the house, bricks are
21 missing and windows in disrepair. We are also going to
22 be entering a demolition order on this. The contractor
23 did advise me that the owner is looking to hire him to
24 do the demolition on that garage.

25 3823 Butternut Street, owner listed
as Ardean Robinson. Siding is broken, missing front and
second floor doors seem to be covered with plastic.
Basement retaining water and disrepair, masonry loose
and tuck pointing. We do have two individuals here in
the audience for this property at 3823 Butternut. I
have spoken to both of them that we are entering the
demolition order, but they would like to enter into the
rehab agreement.

 Would you like to address the Board?
State your name and address.

 MS. ROBINSON: Latisha Robinson, 2521
Washington Avenue, Houston, Texas.

 MR. REED: Welcome.

 MS. ROBINSON: Basically -- I don't even
know where to begin with this. I was the guardian of my
Aunt Ardean Robinson. I have been going through this
since 2018. My aunt went to her grave stressed out
about these properties. She was a victim of elder abuse
from her eldest brother, that's now deceased, Eugene
Robinson and her sister-in-law, Janice Robinson.

1 They entered into a land contract
2 with allegedly the owner, Mr. Caseus, who is in the
3 audience now. Judge Morris, of the City of East
4 Chicago, who used to be my attorney, she sent several
5 certified letters to Mr. Caseus in reference to these
6 properties, letting him know that he does not have
7 rights to this. He stopped paying on the property.
8 They entered into a land contract with him and basically
9 he stopped paying on the land contract.

10 Unbeknownst to my aunt, she still
11 owned these properties because her deceased brother,
12 Eugene Robinson and sister-in-law, Janice Robinson told
13 her that that they lost the properties because they were
14 the POA of my aunt.

15 So with that being said, by them
16 being her POA they stole money from her, property, sold
17 everything. So when Judge Sonja Morris was my attorney,
18 she tried several attempts to contact Mr. Caseus. He
19 basically stopped paying back in 2018. Even though he
20 didn't have the rights to the property, for years he has
21 continued to receive payments from these properties.

22 My grandmother's house has never
23 looked like that. And I have letters that I have sent
24 to Mr. Caseus, as well as the tenants, saying the
25 condition of the home. He failed to accept the letters.
The certified letters I sent, you know, letting them go
back or whatever.

My aunt recently passed, a year and
a half ago. This is basically what drove her to her
grave, and now I am here as executor of her estate. I
have an attorney that's on the letter, Attorney Amber
Boyd, she is on the letter, as this is going through
probate and she basically left me the properties.

So, I went by there yesterday to
inspect the properties or whatever. So now he wants to
talk to me. After all these years he wants to talk.
It's not going to happen, nothing to talk about. I'm
going to do what I have to do to get the properties back
up and running, and work with the City to get them where
they need to be, up to standard. You have to excuse me,
but it has been so stressful.

MR. REED: I understand. Well, I think
you will find in the City we don't get involved in the
legal matters. I understand that you are saying you are
the owner of the property.

MS. ROBINSON: He doesn't have any right
to the property whatsoever.

1 MR. REED: I think the thing to do is
2 keep in communication with the Building Department.

3 MS. ROBINSON: I have. I have talked to
4 James.

5 MR. REED: And there are some things that
6 you need to do with him. We don't get involved in
7 legal, but we appreciate you coming out.

8 MS. ROBINSON: I flew in from Houston
9 with reference to this matter. I did talk to James and
10 I will be working with him to get this rectified.

11 MR. REED: Okay, thank you. Just so you
12 know, I'm sure James explained it to you, that the
13 demolition order is going in, correct?

14 MR. PORTALATIN: Correct.

15 MR. REED: That does not mean the
16 building comes down next week, next month, what have
17 you. As long as there is progress and communication,
18 this is the start of you getting to the property. And
19 we consider all situations or scenarios to help you get
20 the property up to speed. It's not the end game. This
21 is getting it on the radar and see how we work together.

22 MS. ROBINSON: I have a contractor
23 looking to come by and look at the property and get it
24 up to standards.

25 MR. REED: Thanks for coming up.

MR. PORTALATIN: We also have Mr. Caseus
here for this Butternut property.

MR. REED: Who do we have as owner of the
property? What's appropriate?

MR. PORTALATIN: Well, Mr. Caseus did
receive notice.

MR. REED: Come to the microphone and
state your name and address.

MR. CASELLIOS: Name is Rosario Caseus,
6542 Parrish Avenue, Hammond, Indiana. As Miss Robinson
mentioned, I did enter an agreement -- I'm not trying to

1 argue the whole case here -- but I was making payments
2 from 2011 until August of 2019 to Mrs. Robinson, Janice
3 Robinson, which is her aunt. So I am also in the
4 process of taking care of this matter, but unfortunately
5 I did find myself in a big tug of war. That's all I
6 wanted to say.

7 MR. REED: Okay. Well, again, thanks for
8 coming out.

9 MR. PORTALATIN: Mr. Caseus, you do have
10 an attorney, would you just mention who your attorney
11 is.

12 MR. CASEUS: I consulted Robert George.
13 He was -- unfortunately he couldn't be here.

14 MR. PORTALATIN: Is he in touch with her
15 attorney?

16 MR. CASEUS: He will be, I just forward
17 all the information to him. I am trying to take care of
18 this matter as well as soon as possible.

19 MR. REED: Thank you for coming out and
20 you are a part of the record. I think, James, this is a
21 bit of a tricky one. I think the right thing to do,
22 until the actual ownership gets worked out, you have to
23 wait to enter into an agreement.

24 MR. PORTALATIN: I can't enter any rehab
25 agreement until one of the parties is the actual owner.
26 At this point the demolition order is sent, but we'll
27 give them an opportunity to get this hashed out so we
28 can have the property under the name of the new owner
29 and then we can enter into the rehab agreement, because
30 at this point I can't. The only records we have are
31 Mrs. Robinson, who has passed away.

32 MR. REED: I haven't seen one like this.
33 So, again, I encourage you two to keep in touch with the
34 Building Department. We can't have the responsibility
35 of trying to figure out what is going on and it is not
36 our intent to demolish their building if it can be
37 rehabbed. But, again, we need to know who's going to do
38 that and if there is an agreement. So it gets a little
39 tricky, but thank you for coming out.

40 What is next?

1 MR. PORTALATIN: 5730 Drummond Street,
2 rear. The owner is listed as Carol Cody. Photos show
3 property missing windows and doors. It's a property
4 that's been abandoned in the rear. Owner is here.

5 She has been notified that we will
6 be entering the order to demolish, but that, you know,
7 we would speak to her about the process of entering into
8 a rehab agreement. I'm not sure if she would like to
9 speak.

10 MR. REED: You'll be in communication
11 with her and set up that inspection? 3906 Evergreen
12 Street is the next one.

13 MR. PORTALATIN: Yes, but she is here on
14 3740 Drummon.

15 MS. CODY: I am working with a contractor
16 to fix up the building. I do want to rehab the
17 building.

18 MR. REED: Okay, you are in communication
19 then?

20 MR. PORTALATIN: Yes.

21 MS. CODY: I need to find out something,
22 if it was zone 1 or zone 2. I am not familiar with
23 those terms.

24 MR. REED: James is the one to break it
25 down. Sometimes you have to break it down for me too.

MR. PORTALATIN: Okay, thank you.

MR. REED: Thank you for coming out.

MS. CODY: No problem.

MR. PORTALATIN: Since the property is in
the rear, the single family home in front, it may need a
variance.

3906 Evergreen Street, owner listed
as Reliable Properties LLC. Photos show roof in
horrible condition, boarded up doors, siding disrepair.
The owner of this property has responded when he
received the notice and there is permits that have been
issued. I would like to set it for status, actually for
the February 27th meeting.

1 3510 Hemlock Street, owner listed as
2 Roberto Morales. Photos show two-story brick structure
3 missing porch, disrepair, broken and boarded up windows,
4 broken fence, and broken garage door. Owners are here.
5 They have been advised we would order a demolition order
6 and want to enter into a rehab agreement.

7 MR. MORRISROE: Anyone living there now,
8 James?

9 MR. PORTALATIN: No. Address is 3510
10 Hemlock, if you would state your name.

11 MR. MORALES: Roberto Morales.
12 (Conversation held in Spanish.)

13 MR. PORTALATIN: He's okay with the
14 agreement, to enter into the rehab agreement.

15 MR. REED: Tell him thanks for coming out
16 and surely keep in touch with you.

17 MR. PORTALATIN: 3917 Main Street, owner
18 listed as Mass Real Estate Investment LLC. Photos show
19 roof in disrepair, tuck pointing, boarded up windows,
20 walls and general disrepair, stairs broken, missing
21 treads and risers, and missing doors. Also I was
22 speaking to Mr. Tom Wiesnewski who represents Mass Real
23 Estate Investment LLC. He was actually here, but he
24 would like to enter into a rehab agreement. They know
25 that we are going to enter the demolition order on the
property.

 4828 McCook Avenue. Owner is the
Brooks Family. Shows one-story structure with siding
and gutters missing, boarded up second floor, porch
appears to be in poor condition. Rear structure is
boarded up, gutters missing. Appears to have three gas
meters. Cinderblock garage shows wooden beams exposed
to the elements, graffiti on garage door, unpainted
garage, in poor condition. Owner did come and applied
for permits. He has obtained a permit for the porch and
obtaining permits for the rest. I would like to set
this one for status actually.

 MR. REED: They already came prior to
this to get the work done?

 MR. PORTALATIN: They received the
notice.

1 MR. REED: All right.

2 MR. PORTALATIN: I would set this for
3 status for February 27, 2023.

4 MR. REED: Is there a motion to approve
5 the recommendations from the Building Department?

6 MR. TREMBYZYNSKI: Make a motion.

7 MR. DAVIS: Second.

8 MR. REED: Properly moved and second.
9 Hearing no questions, we'll take a vote. All in favor?
10 (All signify aye.)

11 MR. REED: Motion carries.

12 MR. PORTALATIN: Thank you very much.

13 MR. REED: There is no audience
14 participation. Our next meeting is Monday, February 13,
15 6:00 p.m..

16 Is there a motion to adjourn?

17 MR. TREMBYZYNSKI: Make a motion.

18 MR. DAVIS: Second.

19 MR. REED: Properly moved and second.
20 Hearing no questions, we'll take a vote. All in favor?
21 (All signify aye.)

22 MR. REED: Motion carries. Meeting
23 adjourned.

24 *** Meeting adjourned ***
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Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes
of January 23, 2023
Approved and Signed, Monday, January 23, 2023.

Milton Reed, President

Richard Trembczynski, Vice President

Thomas Davis, Member

Olga Cosme, Secretary

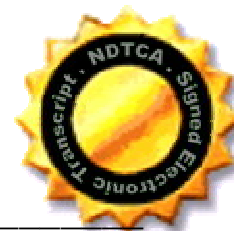
C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Peggy S. LaLonde, a competent and duly qualified court reporter, do hereby certify that I did report in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings and that my shorthand notes so taken at said time and place were thereafter reduced to typewriting under my personal direction.

I further certify that the foregoing typewritten transcript constitutes minutes of the said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Munster, Indiana, this 26th day of January, 2023.

Peggy S. LaLonde



Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR