

City Council condemns troubled property

Written by By Babette Herrmann Sun Editor
Friday, 14 August 2015 05:16



A home located at 705 W. Aztec Ave is slated for demolition, but owner and Utah resident Louis Rocco has 10 days to file an appeal, which could delay the razing of the property.

The City Council voted unanimously to condemn the home Aug. 11.

According to city documents, the request for cleanup began in 2012, with warnings and citations to follow in the years to come.

And it's not only an eyesore to residents living in that area, it's also a public safety issue.

A Metro Dispatch log shows that between Jan. 1, 2009 - March 31, 2015, police were dispatched to the location 74 times.

Domestic violence, attempted suicide, auto accident with injuries, and property damages comprised of the activities that filled the log.

Located in District 4, the property, estimated to be worth about \$59,000, has been on Councilor

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Fran Palochak's mind for some time.

"I have people calling me about the property pretty regularly," she said.

During Code Enforcement Officer Toby Tafoya's May 20 inspection, he noted that the structure is unsafe to live in, flush with weeds and unsanitary. He recommended condemnation on his notice.

Photos submitted with the report show obscene graffiti, boarded windows and doors, unidentifiable trash, and some structural damages to the home.

Rocco's daughter, Rochelle Rocco, pleaded with the council to extend her the opportunity to fix up the place – 30 to 60 days. She broke into tears, saying that she now has the cash to fix the home and wants her ailing father to see it back in shape, before he passes away.

"I just want my dad to see that it could be a rental," she said. "I recently straightened out my act."

Mayor Jackie McKinney empathized with Rochelle Rocco, but explained that the council's hands are tied. To add, she doesn't possess power of attorney over her father's estate.

"Your intent is good," he said. "We have no legal basis to give an extension."

Councilor Allan Landavazo told Rocco, and her boyfriend, who briefly spoke about their intent to clean up the property, that the work needed done goes beyond some simple patchwork. He said it needs new windows, running water and electricity – a major overhaul.

"That's not going to get it," Landavazo said. "It has to be a complete makeover."

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Rochelle Rocco also told the council that she had wanted to get started on the project, but thought the unwelcoming red tagged status meant no one was allowed on the property. That confusion has since cleared up.

Community Planner C.B. Strain said the the red-tagged status “means they can’t live in the house.”

As of press time, City Attorney George Kozeliski said that Strain was out of town. It’s not clear whether Louis Rocco or a family member has filed an appeal.