

A Council on Dangerous/Empty Structures (CODES) Hearing was held March 25, 2025 in the Groves City Council Chamber with the following councilmembers present: Mayor Chris Borne, Mayor Pro Tem Pete Konidis, Councilmember Mark McAdams, Councilmember Brandon Holmes, and Councilmember Rae Shauna Gay. Councilmember Holmes then led the prayer and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Borne called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. He read the Notice of Public Meeting as follows: "The properties that will be discussed have been declared to be dangerous structures by the Neighborhood Services Division of the City of Groves, under the guidelines of the City of Groves code of ordinance, Chapter 28, Article V. Dangerous Structures. The properties will be brought before the City of Groves C.O.D.E.S. Council, at 3947 Lincoln Ave. The Hearing will begin at 5:00 p.m. for a Public Hearing to be held March 25, 2025." The "Notice" listed the locations to be discussed as follows: 6322 32nd St., 5224 33rd St., 6136 25th St., 2724 Boyd Ave., 3230 Boyd Ave., 2640 Main Ave., 3945 Main Ave., 5599 Craig Ave., 3139 Maple Ave., 5024 Monroe Blvd., 6109 Willis St., 6498 Warren St., 3429 Graves Ave., and 5825 Alabama Ave.

Mayor Borne requested reports, and City Manager Kevin Carruth stated that there were none. Mayor Borne then called for citizen comments, and there were none.

Mayor Borne stated that Building Official Don Pedraza and Code Enforcement Officer Adam Mayea now have the floor.

Mr. Pedraza addressed the locations individually as follows:

6322 32nd Street: Building Official Don Pedraza stated that this property consists of two separate structures: a single-family home at the front and a duplex at the back. Mr. Pedraza then noted that the duplex in the back has suffered significant fire damage, and both structures have experienced substantial structural failure, including the main structure and foundation. Mr. Pedraza stated that he requests total condemnation for both structures. Mayor Borne asked if they had access to the inside of these structures, and Mr. Pedraza noted that he could look through the windows in the front structure. The back structure was accessible through the burned part, as there was no wall, but they did not go too far because it wasn't safe. Mr. Pedraza also stated that no one has lived here since 1998. Mayor Borne asked if the taxes were current, and Mr. Pedraza confirmed they were. Mayor Borne wondered if there had been any effort to bring these structures up to code, and Mr. Pedraza stated that nobody had even contacted him regarding these structures. Mayor Borne inquired whether we had issued all the necessary notices to consider demolishing the structure, and Mr. Pedraza confirmed that we had.

Mayor Borne then asked Mr. Pedraza to explain the process the City must go through to reach this point and what kind of time frame is involved. Mr. Pedraza stated that there is a form they fill out that lists everything wrong with the structure. There would be enough for condemnation if the main structure is 33% dilapidated and the non-main structures are 40% dilapidated. If it falls under these percentages, he proceeds to the next section, which states that it can be remodeled. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis inquired about initiating the process for this house, and Mr. Pedraza replied that each address receives three separate letters. The first letter states that the structure is being considered for condemnation. The second letter informs them of the date of the C.O.D.E.S. Hearing, and a third letter notifies them of whether the council has approved condemnation or a remodel. Councilmember Holmes inquired whether the third letter had been sent via registered mail. Code Enforcement Officer Adam Mayea confirmed that each letter was sent through regular and certified mail. City Manager Kevin Carruth then informed the Council that, in addition to the letters sent, the City has placed placards on the building itself and a sign in the yard, and we also publish in the newspaper. In terms of due process, the owner has received multiple notices. Mayor Borne asked Mr. Pedraza if he recommended that these two structures could not be saved, and Mr. Pedraza stated that it was correct.

Mayor Pro Tem Konidis asked City Attorney Brandon P. Monk if everything the City has done has been done by the policy, state, and City laws. Mr. Monk stated that it has gone above and beyond by paying to conduct title searches and providing notice to all title owners. City Manager Kevin Carruth noted that the statute requires us to send notice only to the addresses listed on the Jefferson County Appraisal District records, and the City went above and beyond, conducting a comprehensive title search. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis inquired whether we had conducted title searches for all the addresses listed today, and City Manager Kevin Carruth confirmed that this was indeed the case. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis motioned to condemn the structure at 6322 32nd Street, and Councilmember McAdams seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5224 33rd Street: Building Official Don Pedraza stated that before the passing of Mr. Spikes, he had spoken with him and informed him that this house would be on the next scheduled agenda for condemnation. Mr. Pedraza then stated that the main structure of the flooring is in poor condition, and the front of the roof is collapsing. Mr. Pedraza then indicated that they could not access the inside of the home but could see through the windows. Mr. Pedraza stated that the taxes are up to date. The owner, Natalie Spikes, was present and said she is considering tearing the structure down herself. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis inquired whether the house was vacant, and Mr. Pedraza confirmed it was. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis inquired about the initiation of the process for this property, and Mr. Pedraza stated that he had spoken with the previous owner two or three years ago. Mayor Borne asked Building Official Don Pedraza for his recommendation on this house, and Mr. Pedraza stated that it should be condemned. Councilmember McAdams motioned to condemn 5224 33rd Street, and Councilmember Gay seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6136 25th Street: Building Official Don Pedraza stated that he could enter this structure, and the flooring system is almost level with the ground. Mayor Borne then inquired about the second letter and whether it had been sent, and Mr. Pedraza confirmed that it was sent on February 27, 2025. Mr. Pedraza stated that this location has not had water service since 2019. Mayor Borne asked if this location is savable, and Mr. Pedraza stated it is not. Councilmember Holmes motioned to condemn 6136 25th Street, and Mayor Pro Tem Konidis seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2724 Boyd Avenue: Building Official Don Pedraza stated that this is a two-story structure, and he had access to go inside. The home's structure is deteriorating and infested with termites, fleas, and rats. Mr. Pedraza informed the Council that the taxes are current and that the structure has not had water service since 2002. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis inquired whether this address has a lien, and Mr. Pedraza confirmed it does not. Councilmember Gay motioned to condemn the property at 2724 Boyd Avenue, and Mayor Pro Tem Konidis seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3230 Boyd Avenue: Building Official Don Pedraza stated that this property has no liens and is current with property taxes. There has been no water service since June 2015. Mr. Pedraza noted that the floor structure of the home and the roof are deteriorating. The owner told Mr. Pedraza that he did not see the letter sent, but he did see the placard on the door and the sign in the yard. Mayor Borne asked if the owner had stated his intent regarding the property, and Code Enforcement Officer Adam Mayea noted that he believed the owner wanted to tear it down himself. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis motioned to condemn 3230 Boyd Avenue, and Councilmember Gay seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2640 Main Avenue: Building Official Don Pedraza stated that this property has no liens. The owner was present and said that he intended to demolish the house and utilize the shop in the back when he purchased the property. Mayor Borne asked City Attorney Brandon P. Monk if he sees the need to specify between the two buildings, and Mr. Monk stated in the motion that yes, there is. Mayor Borne stated that JCAD has the address as 2640 Main Avenue, but we need to specify in our motion to condemn the house only. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis motioned to condemn only the home at 2640 Main Avenue and not the commercial metal building. Councilmember Holmes seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3945 Main Avenue: Building Official Don Pedraza stated that there are no liens on the property, and the property taxes are current. The owner, Mr. Harris, said he had never turned the water on. Mr. Pedraza stated that he has a problem with the permit for this business being pulled on January 3, 2025, and that nothing has been done. Mr. Harris noted that someone had broken a lot of the glass on the first floor, so he enclosed the entire bottom floor to prevent anyone from getting in. Mr. Harris then stated that he talked to a gentleman today about trying to do something with the second floor. Mr. Pedraza noted that he gave the permit because he felt the structure could be remodeled or innovative to where that one wall could be fixed. Mayor Borne asked Mr. Pedraza how long the life span of the permit is after he issues it, and Mr. Pedraza stated it is one year for building and the subs of electrical, plumbing, and mechanical are six months. Mr. Pedraza also said he could revoke the building permit after six months if there were no activity. Councilmember Holmes asked if that was a public sidewalk or private to the property, and Mr. Harris stated that it was for the property. Mayor Borne asked Mr. Harris what his intent was with this permit, and Mr. Harris noted that he would like to fix the building to the point that it is acceptable to the city and then sell the property. Mayor Borne then made a motion that they need to repair any damaged wood, dry in the structure, and remove any loose bricks. Mayor Borne then asked Mr. Harris if he could get this started within the next 3 months before his permit gets revoked, and Mr. Harris stated that would not be a problem. Councilmember McAdams reiterated how important this is to the Council because this building is in our city's center. City Manager Kevin Carruth then asked the City Attorney Brandon P. Monk if the motion could include that the building would be condemned after three months if Mr. Harris doesn't meet the conditions, and Mr. Monk stated it could. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis seconded the motion with the addition of that condition. The motion passed unanimously.

5599 Craig Avenue: Building Official Don Pedraza informed the council that there has been no water since 2014 and significant termite damage all around the rotted-out perimeter of the home. All the main seals are also termite-infested and decaying. The roof leaks a little, but not as bad as you think. Mr. Pedraza stated the owner would like to make this an accessory building because he uses it for storage. Mayor Borne asked if this building has any utilities, and Mr. Pedraza stated it does not. Mr. Pedraza stated his recommendation is to condemn the structure but give the property owner 90 days to pull the permit and show substantial progress. Mayor Borne made a motion to give Mr. Granger 90 days to pull a permit and to show adequate progress, and at the end of that, if nothing has been done, then the condemnation process will start at the second building at 5599 Craig Avenue. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3139 Maple Avenue: Building Official Don Pedraza stated that this address is current on property taxes but has had no water service since 2008. Mr. Pedraza noted that the flooring system is rotted, and the roof leaks in numerous places. Mayor Borne asked Building Official Don Pedraza if this building could be saved, and Mr. Pedraza stated it could not. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis motioned to condemn 3139 Maple Avenue, and Councilmember McAdams seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5024 Monroe Boulevard: Building Official Don Pedraza stated that this structure just burnt at the first of the year and is a total loss. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis motioned to condemn 5024 Monroe Boulevard, and Councilmember McAdams seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6109 Willis Street: Building Official Don Pedraza stated that the last water service was in 2006, the property taxes are current, and there are no liens. Mr. Pedraza stated they had access to go inside, and it is a mess but has no significant structural damage. Mr. Pedraza indicated that it could be renovated. The owner said she just bought the property and wants to renovate it. Mr. Pedraza recommended condemnation but also give her a time frame to start the process and show significant improvement. Councilmember Holmes motioned to provide the property owner at 6109 Willis Street 90 days to pull a permit and make substantial progress before the city goes through the demolition process, and Councilmember McAdams seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6498 Warren Street: Building Official Don Pedraza stated that there has not been any water service since 2009 and are current on property taxes. Mr. Pedraza noted that this particular property is the only one on the C.O.D.E.S. list in our special hazardous flood zone. The owner provided Mr. Pedraza with an elevation of their entire structure, which meets the federal government's base flood elevation for flooring in a special hazardous flood zone. Mr. Pedraza stated that the owners want to remodel it and have started the scope of work. Mr. Pedraza was able to go inside the home. The flooring for a pier system is good. However, a couple of places in the kitchen are rotten, and you can see through to the outside. The owner said they gutted it after Harvey, but now their kids use it for storage. There are no liens on this particular address. Mr. Pedraza stated that his recommendation is to condemn and give the owners 90 days to bring it up to code. Councilmember Holmes motioned to give the owner 90 days to make substantial progress at 6498 Warren Street or else start the condemnation process, and Councilmember Gay seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3429 Graves Avenue: Building Official Don Pedraza stated that this address has not had water services since 2022, has no liens on the property, and is current on its taxes. Mr. Pedraza noted that this home can be remodeled, but he has not had any success speaking with the owners. Mr. Pedraza is suggesting condemnation since there has been no response from the owners. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis motioned to condemn 3429 Graves Avenue, and Councilmember McAdams seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5825 Alabama Avenue: Building Official Don Pedraza stated that this address has not had water services since 2002 and is current on property taxes. The owner of this property said that the renters left a lot of junk, and they would like to tear the house down. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis asked the owners if they wanted to tear it down and not remodel, and the owners stated that was correct. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis motioned to condemn 5825 Alabama Avenue, and Councilmember Gay seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Borne thanked Building Official Don Pedraza and Code Enforcement Officer Adam Mayea for their hard work and everyone who showed up today.

Mayor Borne called for Councilmember Comments, and Mayor Pro Tem Konidis reiterated thanking Mr. Pedraza and Mr. Mayea for their hard work. Councilmember Holmes asked about the other residences on the map Council was given, and Mr. Pedraza stated those would be at the next C.O.D.E.S. Hearing.

There was no further business, and Mayor Borne adjourned the meeting at 6:39 p.m.



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk

