



**CITY OF NEWPORT  
COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING  
NEWPORT CITY HALL  
JANUARY 16, 2014  
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

MAYOR: Tim Geraghty  
COUNCIL: Tom Ingemann  
Bill Sumner  
Tracy Rahm  
Steve Gallagher

City Administrator: Deb Hill  
Supt. of Public Works: Bruce Hanson  
Chief of Police: Curt Montgomery  
Fire Chief: Mark Mailand  
Executive Analyst: Renee Helm

**AGENDA**

1. Roll call
2. Discussion Regarding Possible Condemnation Policy to Address Distressed Properties
3. Adjournment

## Renee Helm

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**From:** Frederic ("Fritz") Knaak, Esq. [fknaak@klaw.us]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 13, 2014 12:22 PM  
**To:** Deb Hill  
**Cc:** Renee Helm  
**Subject:** Review of "Trouble Properties" in the City

Deb:

At a staff meeting last week called to deal with the question of the problems related to getting code compliance on the very-slow-moving homeowner at 515 4th, it was pointed out that, as bad as that situation is, there are several others in the City where there have not been neighborhood complaints, but the situation is as bad or worse.

My suggestion was, and is, that the situation at 515 4th be used as a basis for a broader discussion by the City, with direction from the Council, on obtaining code performance on a number of properties within the City that are eyesores, possible health hazards, and generally detrimental to the City.

After some discussion, about a half dozen properties were noted as known "trouble properties" within the City.

I recommend that the community service officer and staff, in conjunction with the police department regarding any incident calls, together compile a list of the properties that would included photographs and a summary of code violations for each.

Each property would then have developed, by the City in conjunction with our office, an action plan with a time frame and graduated sanction and enforcement plan as part of each. Included within these sanctions could be (and this would be part of the reason for council involvement) the possibility of demolition or abatement with the cost assessed against the property under the authority of Minn.Stat. 463.

My recommendation is that this be a matter of overall council policy, perhaps based upon a resolution by the Council formally stating its purpose of improving the safety and livability of the City. To that end, I understand the matter will be brought forward to the next workshop meeting.

Code enforcement efforts on a concerted, city-wide basis can be, in my experience, controversial and subject the City to considerable pushback (e.g., charges of "elitism", a lack of sensitivity to personal economic problems, and the like). If, as I suggest, the issue of 515 4th be handled as part of a larger problem, a full discussion of the need for, and scope of all of those actions is warranted before the staff undertakes to begin the effort.

I will be prepared to discuss this matter at the workshop session as you have requested. Please let me know what else I can do to assist in the endeavor in the meantime.

Fritz Knaak, Attorney at Law, Newport City Attorney Licensed in Minnesota, Wisconsin & Colorado