

**CITY OF URBANA
PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE BOARD OF APPEALS
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6, 2008**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Don Keeler, Kevin Fahey, Dick Halberstadt (by speakerphone) and Gary Stebbins

STAFF PRESENT:

Clay Baier, Stephen Chrisman and Vivian Petrotte

OTHERS PRESENT:

Ginny Dewar and Gary Perkins

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Gary Stebbins at 4:08 p.m. At this time, Dick Halberstadt was called and joined the meeting per telephone.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Gary Stebbins asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held Wednesday, May 7, 2008. Kevin Fahey made the motion to approve the minutes as written and Gary Stebbins seconded the motion. All agreed and the minutes were not only approved as read, but signed by Donald Keeler.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Stebbins said that the case to be heard was for 504 E. Illinois St. The owner has requested a variance for ceiling height. He asked Ms. Dewar to briefly state her position and facts and what they have been doing about it.

Ms. Dewar said she purchased the home in 2003 and rented it until 2007 which is when her tenant moved out. She signed up for the rental registration program but had not been inspected. When her tenant moved out she decided to put it on the market because she was going to retire and wanted the income. When she bought it, it was not in good shape and she and Gary (Perkins) completely brought it up into a very nice looking house. It's a very stable house. She looked it up in the library for when it was built in 1947 and you could see what a good sturdy house it was. The problem is that it has 6'3" ceilings downstairs and there were a couple other things that Clay had found because Ms. Dewar had asked Clay in to take a look at it. This was done because one of the appraisers had said that this was going to be a problem in getting the appraisal and getting a FHA loan, etc. That is why she asked the City in to look at it and give her some general guidance on what she needed to do to make it right. Clay had identified three different things. She has taken care of two of the items as in making more headroom at the bottom of the stairs so that it wouldn't be a head banger and also taking the closet out on the second floor so that the hallway space would provide adequate head room. That is already done and has been repainted and is in good shape but the ceilings they can't do anything about and because of the ceilings it's impeding her ability to sell it. She has

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had three people looking at it since November and has problems getting an appraisal that the bank will approve of. One just fell through yesterday. Because it's a \$65,000 house, it's usually a first time buyer who wants to go FHA. So she is asking for a variance because she would like to rent it.

Mr. Stebbins asked Mr. Baier to briefly state the City's position.

Mr. Baier said that the house was built with a first floor ceiling height of 6'3". It was constructed this way in 1947. The Property Maintenance Code requires a 7' ceiling height. Mr. Baier asked if a variance could be granted for the first floor ceiling for the life of the building.

Mr. Stebbins asked if there was any discussion. Mr. Baier verified that Dick Halberstadt could hear the meeting.

Ms. Dewar stated that the upstairs ceiling was not 6'3", only the first floor.

Mr. Stebbins moved that we grant a ceiling for the 6'3" ceiling height for the life of the building. Kevin Fahey seconded the motion. Mr. Keeler remarked that the only thing that could be done was to lower the floor. Mr. Stebbins asked for a vote. It was passed by unanimous vote to grant the variance for 6'3" ceiling height on the first floor for the life of the building.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Stebbins moved that we adjourn the meeting. Kevin Fahey seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 4:18 p.m. by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved:

Vivian Petrotte

Don Keeler, Secretary

PMCBA:vp