

July 22, 2019

City of Delavan Community

Dear Community:

The City Council, City Staff, and City Fire Department are writing to express their sincerest apologies for the incident that occurred on June 22, 2019 at Brick Street Days. They wish to provide you with information about the incident.

In June of 2017, the City of Delavan purchased the property at 116 S. 5th Street. The property was purchased in order to assist in the planned expansion of the Aram Public Library, with a long-term plan of removing the residence at 116 S. 5th Street.

After multiple unsuccessful attempts to encourage the relocation of the buildings, the only option left to the City was razing the property.

The City was careful to remove all friable asbestos materials from the buildings. This included the transite siding from the entire exterior of both buildings and all the hot air heat ducts from inside the walls of the house. This was done at a cost of \$9,840.00. These items were disposed of safely in an authorized landfill.

The City sought bids to demolish the buildings, however, the bids were non-responsive, and not cost effective for the City.

At the May 21, 2019 City Council meeting, the City Council authorized the fire department to use the buildings for training practice. The City, in attempting to save the taxpayers' money, and to further train our firefighters, decided to have the fire department burn the residence down. The fire department decided it would be a good training opportunity, and less of a burden on the city taxpayers.

City staff was receiving ongoing complaints about the condition of the property at 116 S. 5th Street, and wanted to cost effectively address those complaints.

The City attempted to set up the burning of the property at 116 S. 5th Street for a date in May and then again for June 1, 2019. Unfortunately, the City was advised by the State Department of Natural Resources that additional testing for non-friable asbestos materials was required before they could issue the required permit, and therefore, the fire department was unable to conduct the burning of the property on the original proposed dates.

After receipt of the laboratory results of the roof shingles and filing the corrected permit with the State Department of Natural Resources on June 4, 2019, the fire department attempted to schedule the live burn of the property at 116 S. 5th Street, for June 8th or June 15th. Neither of these dates worked due to a lack of fire instructors being available. In addition, many of the volunteer firefighters chose to take vacations around these days. Therefore, there was insufficient staffing to conduct this burn.

The only date available until October 19, 2019 to conduct this burn was June 22, 2019.

Due to availability of the firefighters, the City scheduled the live burn for that day. The City was aware that Brick Street Days was occurring on June 22, 2019, but, based upon prior history with live burns and a past experience in tying a live burn with a downtown celebration, the City believed that both events could occur without any detrimental impact to either event.

Unfortunately, at approximately 11:30 a.m. on June 22, 2019, while in the middle of the live burn, the wind shifted, causing smoke and ash to be blown over the downtown area where Brick Street Days were occurring. The City understands that people were impacted due to the change of the wind blowing the smoke and ash over the downtown area. The City is grateful that no one was injured, and no serious property damage occurred as a result of this live burn training exercise.

The City Council is reviewing the situation and will be looking at a change in policy regarding whether or not live burns should be conducted within the city limits.

The City wishes to extend its gratitude to everyone who attended and participated in Brick Street Days and the City looks forward to continuing to hold successful events in the downtown business district.

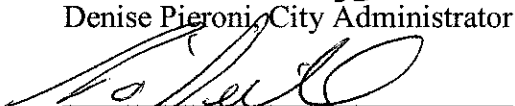
Sincerely,



Mel Nieuwenhuis, Mayor



Denise Pieroni, City Administrator



Tim O'Neill, Fire Chief