

THOMAS C. LEPPERT
MAYOR



VACANT BUILDING PUSH GETS RESULTS

Major Progress Made on 5 of 7 Downtown Structures Those Not Complying Face Litigation

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The owners of five of seven dilapidated structures cited in the recent vacant building initiative have agreed to bring the structures up to code. The owners signed repair agreements with the City, which require them to repair hazardous conditions and mothball the buildings to prevent further deterioration. City leaders consider this a major step forward in the effort to reinvigorate Downtown Dallas.

“These property owners got the message,” said Mayor Tom Leppert. “They understand that being a good neighbor means keeping your property in a safe and stable condition and they’re stepping up to make that happen.”

Last October, the City Attorney’s Office sent letters to the owners of seven downtown buildings regarding numerous code and fire hazards on their properties. Four properties which have signed agreements to meet code requirements include:

- 1604 Main
- 1712 Commerce
- 1902 Commerce
- 1954 Commerce (the Statler Hilton/Dallas Grand Hotel)

Work has already begun on these buildings and the final deadline under the agreements with the City for the repairs to be completed is November 16, 2009.

The owner of 1954 Commerce is also working with the City and **DOWNTOWN**DALLAS to spruce up the storefront of the vacant Statler Hilton as the City’s new park, Main Street Gardens (across the street) nears completion.

Another property, at 211 N. Ervay, is almost completely finished with the necessary repairs. The City anticipates that the building will be in compliance by the end of the month.

“This is a huge step forward for Downtown,” says John Crawford, President and CEO of DOWNTOWNDALLAS. “Bringing these buildings up to code improves

both the safety and the aesthetics of the public space in Downtown. In addition, we believe the improvements will make the properties more attractive to developers or buyers. This is critical to moving Downtown forward.”

The City Attorney’s Office says it filed lawsuits against the two other properties in State District Court today. Their owners have failed to make reasonable repairs to their long-ignored properties, despite City attempts to work out agreements with them.

“We have made every effort to work with these property owners to bring their structures up to the very basic fire and building codes so that they are not a hazard or blight on downtown, but they haven’t complied,” said City Attorney Tom Perkins. “They have left us no choice but to move forward on the legal front.”

These include:

- 1607 Main
- 508 Park

Their lack of cooperation to comply with the City’s requests to fix the violations has left the City with no option but to pursue enforcement litigation. The City’s lawsuits on these properties seek court orders to require the owners to repair their buildings.

The owners of 508 Park, which is located within a historic district, have threatened to demolish the building. Before that could occur, the owners would have to get approval from the City’s Landmark Commission.

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