

7. Re: Protection of Municipally Owned Buildings

Council on October 1, 1973 requested information on methods that could be used to prevent vandals from damaging unoccupied houses that are owned by the Municipality. Following is a report from the Land Agent regarding this matter:

"It has been determined that the Municipality's insurance policy does not cover vandalism when the buildings involved are vacant.

The supervision of vacant buildings is generally difficult, costly and time consuming. In the past when this occasion arose, we have generally requested additional police patrols of the property involved and have conducted personal inspections at night and over week-ends and holiday periods. These methods have not proven to be entirely effective.

Some suggestions have been made regarding the hiring of guard dogs. This method may be effective around construction sites and in large buildings, but the dangers involved in its use in residential areas I think would outweigh its effectiveness, and there is always the possibility of a dog getting free and attacking anyone who happened to be in the vicinity.

It is my opinion the only way that vandalism can be effectively controlled in all of the Municipally owned houses is to keep them occupied at all times. To this end we have already instituted a program which we hope will achieve 100% occupancy. It should be understood that in doing this we will forego a certain amount of rental revenue, but I think this is preferable to the damage which can occur.

The program I am suggesting involves former owners and tenants who may be resident in the houses acquired by the Municipality to stay on for a slightly longer period than we might normally allow without payment of rent. This additional time would allow us to obtain new tenants who would take over immediately so that buildings would not be vacant.

Delays often occur because the new tenant has been required to pay a full month's rent at his previous residence and naturally does not wish to be faced with paying another month's rent so that his accommodation expenditure is doubled during this period. In order that buildings may always be protected we feel that in circumstances of this kind, it is better to allow this type of tenant earlier occupancy at no charge, rather than have a vacant building."

Council on October 1, 1973 considered a proposal involving demolition of a Municipally owned house at 9237 Cameron Street. Council authorized the demolition subject to it first being determined if the Municipality can claim on its insurance policy for the damage that was done to the interior by vandals. This house is being demolished as a result of confirmation that the damage loss is not recoverable per the terms of our insurance policy.

Immediately to the east of the property that was vandalized is another lot that is owned by the Municipality (9289 Cameron Street.) Council on August 20, 1973 authorized acquisition of this property and demolition of the derelict farmhouse that is situated on it. Both the farmhouse at 9289 Cameron and the dwelling at 9237 Cameron are expected to be demolished within the next several days.

This is for the information of Council.