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Liggett fined for code violations

By Christine Haines , Herald-Standard

CONNELLSVILLE - Magisterial District Judge Ronald Haggerty found Brownsville property owner Ernest Liggett guilty of building code violations at three sites, imposing fines and costs of more than \$3,500 Monday.

Haggerty found Liggett guilty of violations at 1719 Market St. for which he imposed a fine of \$2,000 plus costs for a collapsed wall and roof. Fayette County Redevelopment Authority Code Enforcement Officer Donald Bau gh said he sent the notice of violation on the structure to Liggett on March 7, 2008, then filed a citation April 14 when no action was taken.

"I condemned the property because of the condition of the roof and the wall," Ba ugh said.

The building is within the downtown Brownsville targeted code enforcement area known as Project BRIGHT that is being overseen by the redevelopment authority.

Liggett was fined \$1,000 plus court costs for a collapsed roof and other problems at 41 Market St.

"It appears there is no roof on the building. There is no danger of anything fal ling from the building," Haggerty said. "I'll make these flat fines instead of daily fines."

Haggerty fined Liggett \$500 plus costs for broken and missing windows and doors at 56 Market St.

"If I recall, in the past Mr. Liggett had replaced them and vandals were knocking them out and you had someone working on that to board them up," Haggerty said.

Liggett noted that there was one night of excessive vandalism that was reported to the police.

"If the dates in the pictures are correct, they've been like that for months," Haggerty said.

Liggett's attorney Lee Grimm argued that the buildings that were cited are on the list of buildings that the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority has slated for acquisition and demolition under a redevelopment plan for the borough.

"Frankly, I think this is piling on. The properties are slated to be taken, yet the borough continues to try to punish Mr. Liggett for the condition of these properties," Grimm said.

The borough's solicitor, Melinda Dellarose, said that to date, no properties have changed hands and that the borough has been clear in its intent to continue to pursue code enforcement in the borough.

Dellarose withdrew three additional citations against Liggett for properties on Church Street because of inconsistencies between the notice of violations sent out and the citations. Dellarose said those charges will be refilled. Haggerty informed Liggett that four additional citations have been filed against him in the past week for high grass and weeds.

"I would suggest to you that you get someone down there and work on these as soo n as possible," Haggerty said.

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