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## Board meeting

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Agency: Housing Appeals Board

Date: June 26, 2025

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### Summary

- With three members absent, the Akron Housing Appeals Board (HAB) reviewed seven cases brought by the Housing Compliance Division (HCD) recommending the demolition of five properties and granting extensions to two others.
- There was contention over the recommendation to demolish the property at [1431 S. Main St.](#) In February 2025, a [large portion of the building's brick facade fell onto the street and sidewalk](#), forcing the removal and displacement of approximately 60 of the building's tenants. Despite owner Robert Johnson's request for an extension to sell the property, the board felt that Johnson had taken too few actions and the building was a hazard to the neighborhood.
- The meeting had several heated moments but generally moved smoothly. The homeowners who demonstrated proactive efforts to bring a property back up to code were granted extensions, while properties with little to no action taken were recommended for demolition.

## Follow-Up Questions

- Does demolishing these homes contribute to the housing crisis in Akron? A few homeowners cited concerns about the housing crisis, but should that be a consideration, given that many of these properties have been vacant for years?
- How does the city support homeowners before they reach the HAB? What options do low-income owners have to help restore a property?
- The costs needed to repair a home factor heavily into the board's decision. How are these costs determined? Do they take an optimistic or pessimistic view of Akron's future?

## Notes

### Agenda:

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 5-22-25 HOUSING APPEALS Board				
A.	MEETING.			
B.	REVIEW OF PREVIOUS CASE HISTORIES:	COM	WAR	
		P. #	D #	PARCEL #
	CASE #6149 - 881 RAYMOND			
1	ST.	25751	3	68-23534
	CASE #6102 - 1110 SANTEE			
2	AVE.	28214	5	67-47779
	ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS ON NEW			
C.	CASES:			
	CASE #6150 - 890	3469		
3	BANK ST.	4	10	67-02898
	CASE #6151- 997 BYE			
4	ST.	23810	4	67-00633
	CASE #6152 - 386 E. CROSIER	3353		
5	ST.	5	5	68-46728
		2901		
6	CASE #6153 - 255 CROSS ST.	0	3	68-47906
7	CASE #6147 - 1431 S. MAIN ST.	30191	7	67-49418
	ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS ON WAIVER			
D.	CASES:			
	NONE			

## ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS ON APPEAL

### E. CASES:

NONE

### Call to order

- Meeting started at 9:03 a.m. No roll call taken, but quorum was declared, with four out of seven members present.
  - Present
    - Alyssa Figueroa
    - LaNeita Jones
    - Kathy Wilkins
    - Barb Waress
  - Absent
    - Michael Howard
    - Hartense Pryear
    - Robin Rohrich
- Six people registered to testify, and two were added during the meeting.

**Approval of the minutes of the 5-22-25 HAB Meeting.** The May 22 meeting minutes were approved by a unanimous voice vote.

### Review of cases

- Cases appeared in a different order than what was on the shared agenda. No reason was given, but it aligned with those who had signed up to testify.
- [Sanitarian Supervisor Jodie Forester](#) presented the cases to the HAB and answered most of the board's questions. Also present was a staff member from the HCD and an attorney from the City of Akron. While both stated their names, their names were not clear on my recording.
- The board will not hold a July meeting, which means any extension they grant cannot be less than 60 days.

- The city made it clear that the property owners had 30 days to file an appeal of the Housing Board's decision in the Akron Court of Common Pleas.
- During the meeting, one board member asked about the timeline for demolitions. The HCD explained that the city was still working on demolitions from 2021 to 2022 but that properties could be moved up in the demolition process if deemed warranted.
- **Case #6102 – [1110 Santee Ave.](#)** East Akron
  - Case 6102 was a review of a case from the May 22 meeting, where the owner was granted an extension until the June 26 meeting. The owner was ordered to keep the property free of refuse, keep the property secure, complete a repair to the roof, continue with the planned repairs, and schedule needed inspections.
  - Randolph Mosley, the property owner, testified that he has been working on repairing the house and restoring it to habitable condition. The board's questions for Mosley centered around his lack of formal inspections. While the city had conducted a general inspection of the home, the city is not an expert concerning items such as plumbing and electrical. Akron partners with Summit County to conduct these "expert" inspections.
  - The board seemed concerned by Mosley's lack of progress on repairs and failure to obtain the requested formal inspection from the county. However, Mosley was able to assure the board that he was making meaningful progress on the house.
  - Representatives from Akron's HCD also expressed concern that this house had been in the works for the last eight months but said they were comfortable granting Mosley a 90-day extension to complete the work and secure the permits. The house has been stripped (interior cleaned out, drywall removed, etc.) and is now ready for plumbing and electrical work.
  - The board granted a 90-day extension to continue repairs, but proof of habitability and completed inspections must be presented at the September board meeting.
- **Case #6151 – [997 Bye St.](#)** West Akron

- Case 6151 was a new case presented to the board. City officials recommended demolition due to vacancy, minimal compliance with housing orders, the property's dilapidated condition, tax delinquency, and its unregistered status.
  - The city acknowledged that the property owner, Mickey Fry, has taken steps to repair it. Specifically, the repairs to the front porch and the removal of refuse from the backyard were reviewed during the June 24 Inspection.
  - Fry shared with the board a handwritten work plan to bring the property up to code. While the board seemed concerned about Fry's progress, the HCD expressed that it was comfortable with the board granting Fry an extension on the home.
  - The board approved a 60-day extension, subject to the following conditions: obtaining the proper permits for the repairs, having all previously completed repairs formally inspected, maintaining the property's security, keeping the property free of refuse, and making improvements to the outside of the house.
- **Case #6147 – [1431 S. Main St.](#)** South Akron
    - Case 6147 was a new case presented to the HAB. The HCD recommended demolition due to the property's lack of compliance with housing orders, its dilapidated condition, tax delinquency, vacancy and repeated scenes of police activity.
    - The property at 1431 S. Main St. recently [made news](#) when, in February, a large portion of the building's brick facade fell on the street and sidewalk, forcing the removal and displacement of the building's approximately 60 tenants. The falling bricks also caused the closure of the sidewalk in front of the building and one lane of South Main Street that runs in front of it.
    - Property owner Robert Johnson and his lawyer, [Stephen Hanudel](#), requested an extension, allowing Johnson to find a buyer for the building. A possible buyer (whose name was unclear) had come forward but was late arriving at the meeting due to a medical issue. The interested buyer owns the [Marathon Gas Station at 1404 S. Main Street](#), located near the 1431 S. Main St. building, under the name Emerling Properties LLC.

- Once he arrived, the potential buyer expressed his interest in the property but said he wanted to ensure that the building would not be immediately demolished before making a formal offer to Johnson. The board and city officials said no guarantee could be given. They explained to the potential buyer that the building would remain on the HAB docket until it was fully brought up to code, meaning any new buyer would need to attend the monthly board meetings to provide updates. The city and board members expressed skepticism to the potential buyer that the building would be economical to repair.
- City officials also noted that the county had only rated the building for 13 units, not the 51 units currently available in the building. This could hinder redevelopment, as compliance with building codes would only allow for 13 units. Johnson said he was unaware of this condition and that the number of rooms was increased to 51 units in the 1980s, well before his ownership.
- Johnson, with the help of his lawyer, said he was going through a particularly difficult period in his life. He was released from prison in 2023, and this building was left to him by a friend. He mentioned a contentious divorce and other legal matters as reasons it was hard for him to maintain the building.
- Johnson asked the board to consider Akron's current housing crisis and that those who rented at 1431 S. Main St. were often those with extremely limited housing options, with about 30 tenants on the Ohio Sex Offender registry. He said he often worked with the tenants late on rent before evicting them.
- The final aspect of the case presented by Johnson and his lawyer was that, due to restrictions imposed on the building by the fire department and the city, he was unable to obtain proper access to make repairs and get contractor estimates. Johnson provided the board with a recording of himself speaking to multiple contractors to demonstrate that he was being proactive, but he encountered barriers caused by the city. At one point, he explained that one of the contractors quoted him a cost of \$80,000 to get the building back up to code. The city doubted this number was a proper estimate given the building's extensive issues.

- For its part, the HCD presented a case that the building was beyond repair and posed a danger to the community. As evidence, Captain Dennis Shoemaker from the Akron Fire Department's Fire Prevention Bureau and Chris Ludle, director of Public Service for the City of Akron, walked the board through the reports on the building, highlighting what they felt were insurmountable problems. Ludle also explained that the lane closure on South Market Street was incurring a monthly cost of \$1,995 to remain closed — a fee that Johnson would have to cover.
- The case was the most contentious of the June 24 meeting, turning heated multiple times throughout the review. Both sides presented evidence and cross-examined some witnesses. This resulted in the case taking two hours to complete.
- During the review of the case, the board chairperson called for a recess from 10:29 a.m. to 10:35 a.m. and a deliberation from 11:28 a.m. to 11:34 a.m. to discuss the case.
- The board voted unanimously to demolish the building based on the building's dilapidated condition, Johnson's inability to present a feasible or economically realistic repair plan, and the imminent danger board members felt the building posed to the community.
- **Case #6149 – [881 Raymond St.](#)** Sherbondy Hill
  - Case 6149 was a review of a case that was heard at the May 22 board meeting. At that meeting, the board granted an extension on the condition that the property be kept free from refuse, secure, and that the owner schedule an interior inspection. However, the city had not heard from the power of attorney to schedule an interior inspection. Forester did an exterior inspection on June 24. She said the water and gas had been shut off and that she had heard people inside the property. The front door was open, but no one answered. It was also clear that electricity was on illegally, which she reported to FirstEnergy.
  - An advocate for the homeowner requested an additional 90-day extension, as the owner had found a potential buyer for the home. The board requested details about the buyer and proof that any action had been taken on their original extension. The advocate did not provide either.
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- During the course of the conversation, it was also revealed that the homeowner was aware of a squatter living in the residence. However, since she personally knew the individual, she preferred not to involve the police in their removal. Given the request for the extension, the board expressed frustration that no formal action had been taken to remove the squatter.
- The board said this property has been coming before the HAB since 2017 and it was time to take action. The board voted unanimously to add this house to the city's demolition list.
- **Case #6152 – [386 E. Crosier St.](#) South Akron**
  - Case 6152 was a new case presented to the HAB. The HCD recommended demolition due to the property's vacancy, lack of compliance with housing orders, its dilapidated and heavily vandalized condition, tax delinquency, status, and repeated police activity. The property has been secured by the city and is also listed as unregistered.
  - The owner is currently incarcerated, so someone else appeared before the board on his behalf. She read two letters written by the owner pleading not to demolish the house. He said it was a family home and a property he wished to repair so that he could pass it on to his children once he was released from prison in eight to nine months. Beyond what was written in the letter, she was unable to provide any additional details.
  - Forester explained that the city was frustrated with this property, having had to secure the home more than 11 times over the past year. The city had to perform several cleanups on the property as well as cut the grass.
  - The board motioned that, given the lack of compliance with housing orders, the dilapidated and heavily vandalized state of the home, the need for the city to repeatedly secure and clean the property, and that the house is regularly a scene of police activity, the property should be added to the demolition list. The motion passed.
- **Case #6150 – [890 Bank St.](#) Middlebury**
  - Case 6151 was a new case brought by the HCD, which recommended demolition of the property due to noncompliance with housing orders,



vacancy, tax delinquency and extensive fire damage. The house also needs to be secured by the city, and it is unregistered. No one was present to discuss the house.

- The board voted to add the house to the demolition list.

- **Case #6153 – [255 Cross St.](#) University Park**

- Case 6153 was a new case brought by the HCD, which recommended demolition of the property due to noncompliance with housing orders, vacancy, extensive vandalism, and the need for the property to be secured by the city. The property is also unregistered. No one was present to discuss the house.
- The board voted to add the house to the demolition list.

- **Adjournment**

- With no further cases, HAB adjourned at 12:21 p.m.
- The next meeting will be on Aug. 28 at 9 a.m.