




MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Members of the Whatcom County Council; and,
The Honorable Satpal Singh Sidhu, Whatcom County Executive

FROM: Christ Thomsen, Operations Manager 

DATE: February 16, 2024

RE: **AB2024-118 Resolution to declare Whatcom County owned structure located in Hovander Park as worthless**

In response to inquiries raised during the consideration of AB2024-118 Resolution regarding the declaration of a Whatcom County-owned structure located in Hovander Park as worthless, please find the following information:

Which property is addressed through AB2024-118?

The property consists of a single-family residence and is a part of parcel #3902291901900000, located at 5305 Nielsen Avenue, Ferndale, WA. See attached PDF titled *Hovander Homestead Park – Residence Demolition Project – Anderson Rental* for information regarding the structure.

What is the current rental rate?

Current rent is \$1,047.00 per month.

Can you provide a list of future capital maintenance needs?

Future capital maintenance needs include, but are not limited to, roof replacement, siding repairs or replacement, exterior and interior painting, replacement of windows, replacement of the HVAC system, kitchen renovations, etc. In addition, the structure is non-code compliant. Deficiencies, such as the lack of exterior egress from the second story bedroom or accessibility accommodations, need to be considered as capital maintenance is planned and implemented.

What is the cost estimate for the identified capital maintenance needs?

\$180,000 to \$530,000

Has the property actually flooded in recent years?

The property was damaged in the 2021 flood event and was without a functioning heating system for an extended period of time. The property was also damaged in previous flood events.

Time sensitivity?

The department’s goal is to complete demolition and site restoration prior to October 15, 2024, prior to the 2024/2025 Nooksack River flood season.

Is the property rented at this time?

Yes

How long has the current renter been a tenant?

The current tenants have been lessees since 2017, with the lease currently operating on a month-to-month basis

Do we aid with tenant relocation?

While we comply with state and local landlord-tenant laws, including relocation assistance requirements, we have not been mandated to provide relocation assistance thus far. We, however, have worked with previous tenants to provide adequate time to secure alternative housing.

What kind of resources or services do we provide tenants?

Similarly, we adhere to state and local landlord-tenant laws regarding resource or service assistance requirements. To date, we have not been obligated to provide such assistance during tenant relocations.

How many rentals do we have?

Whatcom County Parks manages 12 residential rental units. They include:

- 1) An apartment within the Silver Lake Lodge
- 2) An apartment within the Tennant Lake Interpretive Center
- 3) 9 single-family homes
- 4) One single-family home that also houses the Lighthouse Marine Park office

Furthermore, it's important to note that managing a residential rental program and maintaining rental properties diverts staff and fiscal resources from the Department’s core services. Council Member Donovan raised pertinent questions regarding Whatcom County Parks & Recreation’s role as a landlord/housing provider in relation to our mission and core services. We welcome the opportunity to engage in this dialogue and provide insights to inform further discussion.

Department staff will be available to address any additional questions during both the Council’s Finance and Administrative Services Committee and the Council Meeting scheduled for February 20, 2024. Should you require further information prior to this date, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Respectfully,

Christ Thomsen