

City Collaborates with Owners to Remove Dangerous Structure

Over the years, the City of Saco has had to contend with properties that were abandoned or neglected, for a variety of reasons. In some cases, the structure had deteriorated to such an extent that it met the definition of a “dangerous building.” As such, the City would incur the costs associated with the legal proceedings required to obtain an order from the court to demolish the structure and clean the site after the demolition. Periodically, the owner’s inability or unwillingness to reimburse the City for its expenses in removing the structure, would result in the City taking possession of the property.



The Code Enforcement Office took a different approach when recently tasked with addressing a well-known landmark in North Saco (still owned by the Tweedie Family) located at the intersection of Grant and McKenney Roads.

While the house had been unoccupied and vacant for more than a few years, the structure began to fail due to a collapsed chimney and the house became a “dangerous building”, this past spring. We decided to take a collaborative approach with the family, that was beneficial for both the owners of the property and the City. The proposed plan has enabled the family to retain ownership of the property, ensured the demolition was performed safely, and the City avoided the costs of litigation in the courts.



While each situation is certainly unique from all others, this case proved that the City Administration and Code Enforcement Department are willing to think outside-of-the-box and partner with all stakeholders to bring positive results. In a few months when the loam is raked and grass seed added, the property that once had a dangerous structure will have yielded to a nice green space.