

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
OF
VILLAGE BOARD

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
COUNTY OF HENRY)
VILLAGE OF ORION)

An emergency meeting of the President and Board of Trustees was held at 7:00 p.m., September 21, 2010 at the Village Hall, 1202 4th Street, Orion, Henry, Illinois, to discuss gasoline odor in the sewer main. The following members were present: Cooper, Stiles, O'Leary, and Drucker. Absent: Peterson, Lawson, and Cline.

President Cooper called the meeting to order and led the board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Others in attendance were Sewer Superintendent Chris Lundburg, MidAmerican Energy Co. employee Brian Johnson, and Plumbing Inspector Dean Larson.

President Cooper said the village was notified in the afternoon that a gasoline odor had been detected inside the home of Lela Hawkins, 108 11th Avenue. Mrs. Hawkins reported the incident to MidAmerican Energy Co. Mr. Johnson arrived to check the odor and found it to be gasoline, not natural gas. Without an instrument to properly test the lower explosive level (LEL) of gasoline but realizing the smell was quite strong and it seemed to be coming from basement floor drains, Mr. Johnson notified Clerk Sampson and Sewer Supt. Lundburg. He also left a message at President Cooper's home. Mr. Johnson and the plumbing inspector thought the situation was very serious.

It was explained that Supt. Lundburg immediately placed a fan over the top of the manhole just east of Larson Body Shop, since that was the only manhole in the area where fumes could be smelled. Five manholes were checked in addition to one business and two other residences. No gasoline odors could be found, except in one manhole and at Lela Hawkins' house.

Clerk Sampson said she contacted Hawkins' daughter, Wanda Beck, and advised she remove her mother from the house. Mrs. Beck said she didn't have room for her mother at her house and further stated that her mother would not want to leave. Clerk Sampson told Mrs. Beck she was concerned for her mother's safety. Plumbing Inspector Larson said Mrs. Hawkins left the property to stay with a friend around 5:00 p.m. Clerk Sampson also said she told Mrs. Beck that her mother needed to call a plumber to check for dry traps or other plumbing issues that might be allowing the smell from the sewer main to seep into the house via the basement drains. Mrs. Beck felt the village should check the house for deficiencies, but Clerk Sampson told her the village was not responsible for private property. Inspector Larson said two basement drains were found

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to have no traps, which is illegal. He said his private plumbing service would resolve the problem for Hawkins the next day.

Mr. Johnson said he checked the house shortly before coming to the meeting and found almost no gasoline odor remained, though he still expressed concern that the level of vapors in the house could be explosive. The village's fan had been ventilating the sewer main since mid-afternoon.

The board discussed various theories that could have caused gasoline odors to enter the sewer main. Possibilities included accidental or intentional dumping of gasoline in the sewer main or infiltration from contaminated soil. It was noted that an IEPA L.U.S.T. incident remained open from 1995 at the former Orion Standard Service site. Inspector Larson felt the problem was most likely coming from contaminated soil at the site west of 1st Street between 10th and 11th Avenues where a house once stood but there is now an empty lot.

Trustee Drucker suggested lining the sewer main on 11th Avenue, though he realized the gasoline could seep in at another location. Supt. Lundburg said the village recently spent \$25,000 lining the 1st Street main to try to resolve a similar problem on 10th Avenue.

Other suggestions made to resolve the problem included checking soil samples to pinpoint contamination and drilling monitoring wells to vent the soil. President Cooper asked Supt. Lundburg to contact Missman-Stanley & Assoc. for their advice and ask them to attend the next board meeting to discuss options.

A meter that can measure the explosive level of gasoline vapors will be rented and utilized to monitor the situation. The fan will remain in place over the open manhole for as long as necessary. Cost estimates will be obtained for lining the 11th Avenue main and Missman Stanley will be contacted.

It was noted that Mrs. Hawkins should not return to her residence until the lack of traps in her basement drains was resolved.

Lori A. Sampson
Village Clerk

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