

Pamela Fludgate

National General Properties Testimony

I purchase my building in 2007 with great aspirations to restore a building that was once occupied commercially as office space and manufacturing. I hoped to convert it to multiple units, mixed use, office and retail.

I contacted the township to ask to apply for building permits, followed the instructions as given, and proceeded with renovations.

Over the next 3 years from 2007 – 2010, I applied for a total of 5 permits. Each permit was inspected, with deficiency reports, and final inspections. I was given authorization to open each business that was located in the building.

In 2011 I asked to apply for an additional building permit to open a Cosmetology school. I was advised that I did not have occupancy permits and that I never had building permits.

I requested a face to face meeting with the local inspector. I brought all of my documentation to the meeting. He advised me that he was not aware my building was on septic, he thought it was public sewer and water. I referred to the permits where it was disclosed that it was septic.

He told me to fill out all new building permits for each project, some of them several years old. I stated that I did not want to do that because the original permits fell under the 06 codes, and if I re-applied for the past projects that many things would change per the 2010 codes.

I ultimately hired an attorney to help sort this out. Immediately upon hiring an attorney I received resistance from the code officer. He filed eviction notices, lawsuits, and took every action he could think of to intentionally deter me.

I filed complaints with L&I, ultimately the code enforcement officer and the township received sanction letters for issuing permits in the way they did. I expected after the L&I investigation that we would get our occupancy and move forward. I was then hit with additional lawsuits, and much negative feedback in the local newspaper. We ended up in front of a local UCC board who also

determined that my building permits were zoning permits. I was appalled by the finding, because L&I reviewed the same documents and issued sanction letters.

At the local level the inspector still had major influence over the end result of the UCC Board. The paperwork speaks for itself. The UCC board enabled the inspector to continue his agenda even after reviewing my documents as well as reviewing the sanction letters from L&I.

This to date has cost me \$1,000,000 of losses, due to money being spent for my defense, loss of rents, and loss of renovations dollars from tenants. That amount does not include the \$450,000 that I am currently paying a mortgage on. The entire building has no value without an occupancy permit making a total current loss of \$1,450,000.

I have since tried after to apply for permits, and there is always an unwarranted block.

The state does not have the ability to help me. I have exhausted every avenue accessible to make corrections and get my permits. Every avenue has a roadblock.

It is very concerning to me that L&I issues a license to an inspector, and then does not have the ability to enforce actions. The lack of enforcement I feel comes from thinly written laws, and the fact that I have no other choice but to use this one inspector. I do not have a choice to call another inspector. I feel it is crucial that the public be given a legal right to choose from multiple inspectors.

Not only am I being forced to use him, but I am also being forced to pay him a heavy fee every time. I am being forced to pay an inspector that I personally feel is not adequate to perform his responsibilities as an inspector. If someone I hire is not capable of completing the job, I hire someone else. That right has been taken away from me in this situation. I have now done this for 8 years, I have a beautiful building that is compliant with UCC and I cannot use it.

The law allows this to happen. The law prevents the community from growing, prevents jobs for the community, and revenue for the township which is already financially suffering.

I am left to wonder how it has become that one individual has so much power at his hands at any given time, and the road to resolution does not have the ability to allow other's to interject and make an appropriate decision. I feel that one way to correct this is to allow choice of the inspector. Please consider the request.