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Local Board of Building Code Appeals
Minutes for June 15, 2023 Meeting

A meeting of the Local Board of Building Code Appeals (LBBCA) was held on June 15, 2023 in the 3rd Floor Conference Room of 601 Caroline Street at 4:30 pm.

LBBCA Members Present: Michael Taggert (Chair), Melisa Colombo and Chris Huie.

Others Present: Robert Hale (Appellant), Sherry Sessamen (Recording Secretary) and John Schaffer (Building Official)

The Meeting was called to order by Mr. Taggert at 4:24 pm.

Mr. Taggert opened the meeting with the purpose, which was to discuss the sewer line installation at 1820 Charles Street. Mr. Taggert then asked Mr. Hale to summarize the reason for the appeal.

Mr. Hale stated that he contacted My Plumber to have 2 sewer laterals on his property replaced. When his accessory structure was built, the sewer lateral was tied into the house sewer lateral. This affected the sewer service for the house. He tried to fix the sewer service but eventually signed a contract with My Plumber to do the work. Mr. Hale's main issue was that the sewer lateral inspection performed had a 5-foot head of water pressure not a 10-foot head of water pressure, which is referenced in the code.

Mr. Taggert asked Mr. Hale to clarify on a diagram, approximately where the test plug was located and the depth of the test. He then asked where they applied the 5-foot. Mr. Taggert did calculations with the information provided. The calculations equated to a total head of water pressure of the 5-foot head of water pressure which is the goal of a 10-foot head of water pressure test.

Mr. Taggert asked Mr. Schaffer to clarify that the total head pressure is from the lowest point of water to the highest point of water. To which Mr. Schaffer replied, that was correct.

Miss Colombo stated that based on the drawings and calculations that Mr. Taggert's calculations made sense.

Mr. Huie asked Mr. Hale what was the distance between the test ball plug and the 5-foot head and Mr. Hale answered 75 feet.

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Mr. Schaffer was asked for his comments and provided an explanation as to why he accepted the 5-foot head of water pressure. He stated that the inspector had made several trips to the job site to try to get Mr. Hale's sewer lateral back in service since he had been without service for several days. On the final trip, the inspector waited for the plumber to get the test on the sewer line. They were able to maintain 5 - foot of head water pressure for fifteen minutes with no leaks. The inspector felt 5 - foot head of water pressure was adequate since there were no leaks. Mr. Schaffer stated that the most important issue was that it was not leaking. He believes that even though it was a 5-foot head of water pressure and not a 10-foot head of water pressure, the intent of the code was met.

Mr. Huie provided and read a statement from the 2012-2014 Code Development Cycle regarding a change in the 2015 IRC code for head pressure testing and it stated that there is no significant difference in pressure a 5-foot head of water pressure test and a 10-foot head of water pressure.

Miss Colombo asked Mr. Schaffer if there is any situation where someone is forced to do a 5-foot head of water pressure instead of a 10-foot head of water pressure test. He replied, that accepting a 5-foot test as opposed to a 10-foot test is based on the individual situation and that he could not reference a particular scenario at that time. Miss Colombo stated that it is within the authority of Building Department to interpret the code as to whether a 10-foot of head of water pressure is required, or they can accept a 5-foot head of water pressure.

Mr. Huie stated that since it did not leak at 5 - foot head of water pressure, he believes it wouldn't leak at 10 - foot head of water pressure.

Miss Colombo believes that as it didn't leak under pressure, that the sewer line will not leak unless there is a defect.

Mr. Taggart stated that the total dynamic head pressure of 75 feet takes the place of the 10-foot head of water pressure, in his opinion.

All board members concurred with Mr. Taggart's opinion.

At this point, Mr. Taggart considered the appeal closed and will be providing a formal statement, which will be published for the public record.

The Meeting adjourned at 5:11 pm.

Sherry Sessamen, Secretary
Local Board of Building Code Appeals