



March 19, 2018

Ralph Blessing
Land Use Bureau Chief
City of Stamford
880 Washington Blvd.
Stamford, CT 06901

Dear Mr. Blessing,

After reviewing your proposed ordinance change (LR30.032) and flowchart, I have a few comments.

Typically, when investigating possible zoning violations, an investigation starts with a formal complaint filed with the City. However, the cure for such complaints, regardless of the path taken; whether voluntary or the result of legal action, often results in a temporary cure with the property returning to the conditions that led to the complaint in the first place.

In practice, the history of these complaints and actions is not a factor when investigating new occurrences of the same or similar violations at the same property. This leads to chronic serial violations on a property. I recommend that the history of complaints at a property be maintained as part of the WebQA process.

The ordinance proposal should then address this by requiring that a database record (log) of all complaints at a property is recorded by date and include all actions taken (inspection, cures, fines, legal and status.) The log requirement will result in a complete history of activity for each property that has received a complaint. Further, to address serial violations, that the ordinance allows the assessment of an immediate fine, should the property be subjected to a new complaint of a previously cured zoning violation.

Current Connecticut judicial practice adjudicates zoning violations in court with dismissals when the defendant in the lawsuit, cures the original violation/complaint. Even without legal action, as long as the initial violation is inspected and cured, at any point in the process, the issue is considered closed.

By maintaining a log of actions over time coupled with immediate fines for repeat violations, this ordinance is strengthened specifically to address repeat violations.

Sincerely,

Jackie Lightfield
Executive Director