

## Email from Maria Bassett regarding 292 Gardenia Street and handling of tenant

*"I had a meeting with staff on Tuesday (Roget Bryan, Kelly Toth, AJ Engelmeyer, Ty Harris and Terry Abel) to find out what they knew about the Village's purchase of 292 Gardenia, the eviction of the tenants and the timing of the demolition. None of these individuals had any direct communications with Helen as the purchase by the Village progressed. For whatever reason, Seth handled this effort directly. When a wire was needed for the closing, he provided me the wiring instructions. Seth brought requests to purchase and close on the property to the Village Council. Staff's recollection was that the utilities were already off when the Village purchased the property. The Village did not request they be shut off. The demolition did not occur until after the structure was used by Fire Rescue and the Sheriff's Office for training in June.*

*After the staff meeting yesterday, Kelly provided me with emails from Helen to Mike Forster beginning on 12/13/2019 when Helen confirmed she was told by Mannix that she would need to move. She contacted Mike but did not state specifically what her expectation was as a result. Mike Forster then contacted Seth Lawless on 1/2/2020 for his "thoughts" regarding Helen's email. Other conversations may have taken place by phone.*

*By 1/29/2020, Mary Swaney contacted Helen by email likely at Seth's direction and began working with Helen to gather information on Helen's moving costs and increased rent for the period comprising the remaining months of her lease. Apparently, Mary was working with Helen and trying to include these costs in a HUD / CDBG-DR (post-Irma) grant application for funds to purchase and/or develop land for affordable housing. For this grant application, Seth opted to use the services of an outside grant writer, IBTS (Institute for Building Technology and Safety), that was in our contractor library to assist the Village. Chris Sante had hoped to be able to develop the 292 Gardenia properties as a non-profit through the Lions Club with these grant funds and possible involvement of Design Center in Marathon. I recall offering that we could handle the grant application internally, but Seth preferred to utilize the outside consultant due to the complexity. I also recall expressing some concern that Chris was temporarily back on the Village Council. I'm not certain when the grant application was submitted.*

*On 4/7/2020, Seth received an email from IBTS advising that the Village had not been awarded the grant to purchase and/or develop 292 Gardenia.*

*On 5/21/2020, Helen contacted Mary and asked if the Village had heard anything further about the grant. Mary replied that the Village was not awarded the grant and that no grant funds were available to remit to her. Mary stated that she did not know the amount of financial assistance that Helen had hoped to receive. I see previous emails in the email archive between Seth and IBTS where IBTS explained that because a tenant was living at the property, certain aspects of the grant were triggered like being able to apply for tenant relocation costs and for any increase in rent over a certain period. Seth and the contacts from IBTS went back and forth with certain information, and I guess this is where Seth would ask Mary to ask Helen for information. It does not appear that Seth communicated directly with Helen. I'm not able to find a copy of the final grant application to be able to better determine how much Helen would receive if the grant was approved.*

*My understanding is that if the Village did not receive the grant, the Village [Seth] did not offer to pay any of Helen's expenses or increased rent costs directly. I'll need to talk to Roget and go over the closing statement where the Village was given credit for rent and see if this means that the Village owed Helen this money since the lease was terminated.*

*I saw the article today on Helen and that she is moving to North Carolina. **If there is a specific monetary request that Helen would like to make at this time, then she needs to send a letter to this effect to***

*me. She would need to provide forwarding direct contact information as well. I'd then see what I can do or justify, but I cannot guarantee anything at this point."*

**Source: email to Sue Miller sent 11/11/2020 following inquiry as to what Village owes previous tenant at 292 Gardenia**