

Talking Points Short Version

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CITY CLERK

My name is Garry Thompson I own some rental houses in Terre Haute. Last winter we had 2 vacant houses that the plumbing froze and broke, flooding the basement. We received the first high water bill for 2008 1st Ave. and immediately had the water turned off.

Unknown to us the water company was mailing the water bills for 422 S. 15th to 115 S. 14th instead of the requested mailing address, 1348 Ohio, our office.

115 S. 14th is also one of our rentals. It was also vacant. When we rented it the new tenant brought over to our office the mail in the mail box. This included several water bills all of which indicated a leak. Again we immediately had the water turned off. There is NO floor drains in either of these basements so the water did NOT go down the sewer. It soaked into the ground.

We also have a house at 1201 Oak Street. This house was occupied and the Water was in the occupants name. We learned that 1201 Oak had an underground leak. Since the house was sold on contract we contacted the buyer and he assured us he was aware of the problem and the water was off and he would take care of the water & sewer bills.

I Knew the sewer bills were mine to pay if he failed to do so. So I kept in close contact with him. He kept assuring me that he was taking care of the problem. He later informed me he was getting nowhere with the sewage billing office.

At this time I spent 6 days in the hospital and when released I had Doctor appointments with 6 or more doctors over the next 2 weeks. I called the occupant every day at least 2 times each day. All I got was his voice mail. I left messages for him to return my call.

I never heard from him so I sent my Maintenance man, Randy Kirby to knock on his door and put him on Randy's phone or leave a notice in his door to call me.

Randy returned and said the house looked vacant. I sent him back with a key and he returned with the news that the house WAS vacant. We began receiving the Sewer bills

422 S 15th	\$12,837.44
2008 1st Ave.	\$2,769.24
1201 Oak.	<u>\$9,571.58</u>
	\$25,178.26

We called the water company and we got adjustments to the water bills.

I do Not think they took into account that it was their fault that the water bills for 422 S 15th went to the wrong address. But I was pleased that they did adjust all the bills some, and the water company has been paid.

I called the sewage billing office and spoke with Brad Spidel. I wanted to prove to Brad that the water did NOT go down the sewer by having him or someone he appointed to come to 1201 Oak when the water company turned the water back on. He would witness the needle on the water meter going around and around and the cutoff valve in the basement would be in the off position proving no water was entering the house.

Brad said they trusted the people were telling the truth if they said the water did not go down the sewer. So there was no reason to come out. The sewer bills were adjusted based on the adjusted water bills. The adjusted sewer bills are:

422 S 15th	\$4,555.40		
2008 1st Ave.	\$689.30		
1201 Oak.	<u>\$3,632.17</u>	PLUS A LIEN ON MY PROPERTY TAX AT 1201 OAK OF	\$2,227.29
	\$8,876.87		
Pr. Tax Lien on 1201	<u>\$2,227.29</u>		
	\$11,104.16		

NOTE that 2008 1st Ave. Is the only one of the three we got early notice of the leak.

Brad has done all that he can do being limited to the rules set out by this city council. And that is why I am here.

I feel the water company did their part. They pumped the water, treated it and provided the system to deliver it.

On the other hand since the water soaked into the earth I do NOT have the same feeling about the sewer bills.

The sewer company did NOTHING to deserve a payment of this amount. I received nothing from them.

The city provide me NO service for any of the three bills. And the water that soaked into the ground did not cost the city anything. They did NOT have to treat it, dispose of it or not even know of its existence except for the water bill.

I am asking for a reduction in my sewer bills for 422 S 15th and 2008 1st. Ave. to the minimum sewer bill for that period of time since the houses was empty. And an adjustment for 1201 Oak to the average sewer bill while the house was occupied by the buyer. Excluding from this average the period of time of the leak.

My proof for 1201 Oak is the \$1,300 bill I paid to Ron Myrtle to repair my underground line. My proof for the other two properties is the testimony of the maintenance men that saw the 4 foot deep water in the basement of 422 S. 15th and the water standing in the basement of 2008 1st Ave. In addition a representative from the sewer company can see there is no floor drain in 422 S 15th and 2008 1st Ave.

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