

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
SUBSTANDARD BUILDING BOARD
OF THE CITY OF NORTH RICHLAND HILLS, TEXAS,
HELD AT THE COUNCIL WORKROOM, 4301 CITY POINT DRIVE
OCTOBER 14, 2025**

The Substandard Building Board of the City of North Richland Hills, Texas met on the 14th day of October 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Workroom.

Present:	Daniel Caulkins	Place 1
	John Cope	Place 3
	Caroline Martin	Place 4
	Cynthia Ward	Place 5
	Brian Crowson	Place 6, Chairman
	Hilary McMahon	Place 7

Absent:	Matthew Reed	Place 2
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Staff Members:

Kristin James	Asst. Director of Neighborhood Services
Annabelle Ackling	Attorney
Meagan Merrill	Acting Executive Secretary
Rayneice Horne	Lead Code Compliance Officer

A. CALL TO ORDER

Brian Crowson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Mrs. Merrill verified with Mr. Crowson that no public meeting appearance cards had been submitted.

Mr. Crowson introduced the new members of the Substandard Building Board. Cynthia Ward, Place 5. Caroline Martin, Place 4. John Cope, Place 3. Daniel Caulkins, Place 1. Hilary McMahon, Place 7. Brian Crowson, Chairman, Place 6.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS - AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO ADDRESS THE SUBSTANDARD BUILDING BOARD ON MATTERS WHICH ARE SCHEDULED ON THIS AGENDA FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE BOARD, BUT NOT SCHEDULED AS A PUBLIC HEARING. IN ORDER TO ADDRESS THE SUBSTANDARD BUILDING BOARD DURING PUBLIC COMMENTS, A PUBLIC MEETING APPEARANCE CARD MUST BE COMPLETED AND PRESENTED TO THE RECORDING SECRETARY PRIOR TO THE START OF THE SUBSTANDARD BUILDING BOARD MEETING.

Chairman Crowson informed the Board that no one had signed up to speak during public comments.

C.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JULY 16, 2024, SUBSTANDARD BUILDING BOARD MEETING.

MR. DANIEL CAULKINS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 25, 2025, SUBSTANDARD BUILDING BOARD MEETING. MR. JOHN COPE SECONDED THE MOTION

MOTION TO APPROVE CARRIED 6-0.

C.2 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN.

Mr. Crowson asked if there were any nominations for Chair. In response, Mr. Daniel Caulkins nominated Brian Crowson as Chairman. Mr. Crowson accepted the nomination. No other nominations were made for Chairman.

MR. DANIEL CAULKINS MOVED FOR MR. BRIAN CROWSON AS CHAIRMAN. MR. JOHN COPE SECONDED THE MOTION.

MOTION TO APPROVE CARRIED 6-0.

Chairman Crowson, asked if there were any nominations for Vice Chair. In response, Ms. McMahon nominated herself as Vice Chair. Ms. Ward nominated herself as Vice Chair. No other nominations.

Chairman Crowson called for a vote. Daniel Caulkins, John Cope, and Hilary McMahon were in favor of Hilary McMahon.

MR. DANIEL CAULKINS MOVED FOR HILARY MCMAHON AS VICE CHAIR. MR. JOHN COPE SECONDED THE MOTION.

MOTION TO APPROVE CARRIED 6-0.

C.3 SBB 2025-101 PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION AS TO WHETHER THE FOUNDATION AND POOL ON THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 6909 MEADOW CREEK DRIVE, LEGALLY DESCRIBED AS MORGAN MEADOWS SUBDIVISION BLOCK 2 LOT 3 IN THE CITY OF NORTH RICHLAND HILLS, TARRANT COUNTY, TEXAS, ARE SUBSTANDARD WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE CITY'S ORDINANCES AND ORDER REPAIR OR DEMOLITION OF THE STRUCTURE.

Chairman Crowson swore in staff member Kristin James.

Ms. James introduced herself and displayed the staff presentation about 6909 Meadow Creek Rd. Ms. James started with explaining an aerial view of the property and zoning map, and oriented the Board to its location, zoning, and condition. Ms. James continued with the case history—this case was initiated June 17, 2019. The structure had been vacant and was secure but substandard; staff had been in contact with the owner, Mr. Mike Tran, regarding its condition. Mr. Tran told staff that his intent was to remodel the structure to bring it into compliance, and staff was attempting to work with him to

achieve that goal. An unpermitted dumpster was previously in place during that time period, and has now been removed.

Staff noticed that the structure was demolished without permits in November 11th, 2024. Officer Horne observed high grass and weeds and an accumulation of building materials on the property May 1st, 2025. Upon further investigation, it was found that both the foundation and pool remaining on site were in violation of the ordinances governing substandard structures. On June 10th, 2025 Managing Director of Community Development Stefanie Martinez issued a notice of violation to abate the hazardous conditions on site by June 12th, 2025. Office Horne conducted an on-site inspection on August 26th, 2025; during that inspection, the foundation was observed to be deteriorating, wood rot and damage was observed, and structural components were missing; the pool had not been maintained, showed signs of dilapidation, and retained standing water, creating multiple health hazard and safety concerns. Code Officer Simmons and Code Officer Aguayo drained the stagnant pool on August 27th, 2025 to abate the immediate health and safety issues caused by the standing water on site. On August 27th, 2025, Code Officer Simmons walked across the foundation and fell through—further demonstrating the hazardous and substandard condition of the foundation.

Chairman Crowson asked if this is a pier and beam foundation. Ms. James responded that yes, it is.

On September 4th, 2025, a notice and order were issued by Certified Mail and posted on the property. On September 22nd, 2025, a notice of hearing was posted on the property. On September 24th, 2025, a notice of hearing was sent Certified Mail.

Ms. James presented to the board about the current violations that currently exist on the property, and the specific codes that relate to them. Ms. James showed the board time-stamped photographs of the property over the preceding few months. Photos included debris on the property, a close up look at the foundation, and the swimming pool with standing water and tiles falling off. Photos of the property from October 13, 2025 were also shown to the Board. Ms. James clarified that the property is fenced and secure, but the gate is not locked.

Ms. James confirmed that in the opinion of staff, this property is in violation of each code referenced in the presentation and is in substandard condition. Ms. James presented staff recommendations that the Board find that the property is in substandard condition, require that permits be obtained within 15 days, including the demolition permit not obtained when the structure was demolished. Staff also recommends that substandard structures be repaired or demolished, and all debris removed, within 30 days of the board order. Furthermore, if the property owner fails to bring the property into compliance, the City should be authorized to bring this back to the Board to request a civil penalty, which may be assessed against the property for failure to repair and demolish the structures within the required time frame in accordance with Section 98-470 of the City's code. The civil penalty may be assessed at \$1000 per day that the property owner remains in violation of the ordinance after the time allotted in the Order for repair or demolition of the structure. Ms. James offered to answer any questions that the Board members have.

Mr. Crowson asked if the initial notice was issued in 2019, what happened between the first notification issued in 2019 and 2024? Ms. James responded that staff have been trying to work with the owner; the owner maintained that he was trying to remodel the property, and we were attempting to be patient and allow the owner to remodel the property to bring it into compliance. COVID happened, staff lost communication with the owner, and several other large substandard cases happened that demanded Staff attention. Ms. James also confirmed that the owner stopped responding to staff phone calls and emails in that time period.

Mr. Crowson asked if the owner was local, and Ms. James responded that he is located in Bedford. After the owner stopped communicating with staff, staff physically delivered notice to the owner at the Bedford office, but he wasn't there. He did contact staff after receiving those notices, and spoke with Managing Director Martinez.

Mr. Crowson asked about the recommendation of staff to have the property owner get a retroactive permit for the demolition. Ms. James affirmed that staff wants Mr. Tran to apply for the demolition permits that were never obtained. Mr. Crowson asked if it would be better to give the property owner a fine. Ms. Ackling responded that the Substandard Building Board could not levy a fine retroactively for the lack of permit. Ms. Ackling explained to the Board that demolishing or building a structure without a permit is a common occurrence, and the City will routinely require retroactive permits to check the work that has already been done. Ms. Ackling and Ms. James opined that requiring the retroactive permit often "works" as a fine, because the owner is still required to pay those permit fees.

Mrs. Ward asked about costs to mow high grass and drain the pool at the property. Mrs. James affirmed that several liens have been filed against the property for mowing and for draining the pool. Every time that we have abated an issue on the property, we send an invoice; those invoices were largely ignored, and several liens have been filed as a result.

Mrs. Martin asked if the property owner has indicated at all that he wants to work with the City. Ms. James says not really; he'll say that he'll do something to resolve the issues, and he doesn't follow through with it. For example, when talking with the owner about high grass and weeds—he told staff that he would apply weed killer to permanently kill the grass, but never did so.

Mr. Caulkins asked if the property owner indicated that he wants to build on the foundation. Ms. James responded that the property owner did tell staff that he wants to build on the foundation; the Building Official told the property owner that he needs to submit an engineer's report stating that the foundation is safe to be built on, and the property owner has never provided that report.

Mr. Cope asked about the templates for three motions that had been provided by the staff. Mrs. James explained the three motions were provided by the City Attorney and the differences between them. The first order gives the Board an option to give the owner the opportunity to repair the foundation and pool on site. The second order is written based on if the Board believes that repairs are not feasible—for example, if the Board believes that the foundation cannot be repaired. The third order is written based on if the Board believes that the structures may be repairable but that the time to do so

is not feasible, given that the property owner has already been given time to repair the substandard structures on site.

Mr. Caulkins stated—there are two options—we either give him more time or tell him to demolish the structures. Ms. James affirmed yes.

Mr. Caulkins identified that there are two substandard structures on site—the pool and the foundation. Mr. Caulkins asked if filling the pool with dirt will abate the violation. Mr. Crowson interjected that a securing fence is required for swimming pools, and Mr. Caulkins clarified that he was referring to filling the pool with dirt and not water. Ms. James says yes—filling the pool with dirt would abate the violation.

Ms. James also let the Board know that the City obtained quotes to fill the pool with dirt, and also for demolishing the foundation; Mr. Tran did not respond to the City's offer to move forward with those quotes and the work.

Mr. Caulkins opined that in his experience in construction of 34 years, he doesn't think that the foundation can be useable or repairable. Mr. Caulkins also suggested that an environmental assessment of the property for asbestos and other contamination may be needed. Mr. Caulkins also doesn't see there's any way to address the hazard of the pool without it being removed or filled with dirt. Mr. Caulkins asked if the fence on site is owned by the property owner or rented. Ms. James confirmed that the fence on site is rented, and that the City is not paying for this fence. Ms. James also confirmed that the dumpster and chemical toilet on the property in the past was paid for by the property owner, as verified by Republic Services. Mr. Caulkins opined that he's leaning toward the third motion.

Ms. Ackling reminded Mr. Crowson to open and close the public hearing. Mr. Crowson opened the public hearing. Mr. Crowson started the public hearing and asked the owner to step forward. The owner not being present, and no other persons present that wanted to speak, Mr. Crowson closed the public hearing. Mr. Crowson opened the matter for discussion by the Board. The Board discussed options for addressing the issues on property.

Ms. Hilary McMahon made the following motion: "Based on the evidence presented, I would move that the Board find the following facts exist: First, that the pool and foundation located at 6909 Meadow Creek are substandard and a public nuisance. Second, that the conditions set forth in the notice and order of Neighborhood Services Director exist to the extent that the life, health, property, or safety of the public are endangered. Third, that the owners have been given a reasonable opportunity in the past to make the necessary repairs, and there is no reasonable probability that the pool and foundation will be repaired within a reasonable period of time, even if additional time were given. Further, that the pool and foundation are unfit for human habitation, and—there aren't occupants, but—the structures must be secured until the work is completed. I would also like to move that staff's recommendation for a civil penalty if they don't perform the demolition (sic) within the time period provided by the Board, and that they should do so within thirty (30) days. I further move that the Board order the property owner to demolish and remove the pool, foundation, and all debris within thirty (30) days. If the owner fails to do so, the City shall demolish the structures at its own expense and place a lien on the property. I also move that the property owner get

the demolition permit for the structure that was demolished on the property without a permit.”

Ms. McMAHON CALLED FOR THE MOTION FOR THE BOARD ORDER. MR. CAULKINS SECONDED THE MOTION.

MOTION TO APPROVE CARRIED 6-0.

C.4 2026 SUBSTANDARD BUILDING BOARD MEETING DATES

Mr. Crowson asked Mrs. James to present on meeting dates.

Ms. James wanted to confirm that the second Tuesday of the month is preferred for meetings. Formerly, the Board was meeting on the third Tuesday of the month, but this conflicts with the Keep NRH Beautiful Board meetings. General agreement was received from the Board members.

Mr. Crowson did state that the Board used to be provided dinner and asked if the budget provides for this. Mrs. James stated that yes--we will provide dinner in future.

Mr. Crowson asked Ms. Ackling if they needed to vote on this. Ms. Ackling said no.

C.5 2025 SUBSTANDARD BUILDING BOARD TRAINING

Annabelle Ackling, Attorney, presented the 2025 Substandard Building Board Annual Training presentation.

Mrs. Ackling informed the Board they would be trained on the following:

- Boards and Commissions
 - Rules applying generally and specifically to SBB
- The Open Meetings Act
- Local Government Code Chapter 54, as it relates to Quasi-Judicial Enforcement.
- Rules of Procedure
- Public Information Act

Ms. Ackling provided an overview of the composition, terms of office, qualification for membership, attendance, meetings, removal of member process and types of Boards. Ms. Ackling explained that the Board is a quasi-judicial entity that acts, in effect, like a group of judges that balances community protection with individual property rights.

Ms. Ackling informed the Board that Chapter 54 Texas Local Government Code allows a Municipality to enact if they want to have a Substandard Building Board. Not every Municipality has a Substandard Building Board. This code allows a municipality to create the Board and enact provisions into your city code to form the Board and the Board to carry out that function.

Ms. Ackling presented all the case types that the Board could be presented to the Board and the possible outcomes including civil penalties and different types of orders that can

be issued by the Board. Ms. Ackling also clarified that the Board can address items not just inside structures, but on and around a property.

Ms. Ackling reminded the Board that \$1,000 is the maximum amount allowed per day for penalty, and clarified that the penalty does not start until the day after the deadline on the order.

All meetings are required to comply with the Texas Open Meetings Act. Ms. Ackling went over the Rules of Procedures which included what the quorum is, types of action the Board can take, procedures on the hearing process, questions that come across the Board, what is required in the notices that go out, and if a Board member is disqualified from voting on a matter.

Ms. Ackling reminded board members that they should not discuss Board business with each other or staff outside of the meetings. Ms. Ackling also cautioned Board members to refrain from giving opinions until all of the evidence has been presented on matters before the Board. Ms. Ackling explained that Board members are open to the public, and that the public are allowed to present their views and opinions to the Board. It is important that those providing testimony be sworn in. Each member must vote “yes” or “no” unless there is a legal conflict. Mrs. Ackling explained the rules of procedure for meetings and how they work. No arguments are permitted between individuals during Board meetings; each party is given an opportunity to present their case without interruption. Ms. Ackling explained to the Board how to ask questions, and when only clarifying questions are allowed. Ms. Ackling also described what should be stated in an Order. Once the Order has terminated, the property owner has thirty days to appeal the decision of the Board.

Ms. Ackling reminded Board members of when to recuse or disqualify themselves, as required by City and State code. Mrs. McMahan asked if NRH City code has any other conflict of interest rules in addition to the ones discussed. Ms. Ackling and Mrs. James said no—not to their knowledge.

Ms. Ackling informed the Board that Public Information are written, produced, collected, assembled, or maintained under a law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by a governmental body and for a governmental body owns the information and has a right to access to the information. Public information can be a book, paper, letter, document, e-mail, Internet posting, text message, instant message, other electronic communication, printout, photograph, film, tape, microfiche, microfilm, photostat, sound recording, map, and drawing and a voice, data, or video representation held in computer memory.

Ms. Ackling advised the Board to be careful conducting business on personal devices as those emails/text become city property and, if requested, are subject to Public Information.

Mr. Caulkins asked about personal emails and text—which ones are considered public information under the PIA. Ms. Ackling clarified that the only public information on a personal device that would fall under the public information act are the ones pertaining

to City business. For example, communications between him and his wife would not qualify.

Ms. Ackling went over how public information is requested and the penalties for violation of the Public Act.

Mr. Crowson asked Ms. Ackling to clarify the options for property owners to appeal Board orders. Ms. Ackling clarified that the SBB board order is binding, and the property owner has 30 days to appeal the order to the District court or they lose their right to appeal.

Mrs. Ward asked how fines and liens are mitigated. Ms. Ackling clarified that those are dealt with before the property can be sold. The City is second priority on the liens; sometimes it can take years, but that's how someone can recoup the costs. Ms. Ackling clarified that the City cannot force someone to sell their property. Ms. Ackling clarified that sometimes property owners don't have the money to address issues—sometimes, the City will address issues with the consent of the property owner.

D. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Crowson adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Brian Crowson, Chairman

ATTEST:

Executive Secretary