

The Liberty Letter

Liberty Tower Condominiums

March 2005



Liberty Tower Owners Association

1502 S.
Boulder Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74119

PH: 583-3730
FX: 583-3733

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Scott Williams
(*president*)
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(*secretary*)
Walter Long
(*treasurer*)
Joe Miller
(*asst. treasurer*)

Virginia Walker
Geoffrey Harris

Manager

Lisa Hays

LTmgr
@sbcglobal.net

Fire Sprinkler Order Being Appealed

An LT task force is working on several fronts to challenge a Tulsa city ordinance requiring automatic fire sprinkler system installations in existing high-rise buildings by Jan. 1, 2010.

Ordinance 20824, which went into effect last May, adopted the 2003 International Fire Code for the City of Tulsa. The high-rise sprinkler provision was included among numerous local amendments to the IFC.

The Tulsa Fire Marshal's Office delivered an inspection notice to LT management on Feb. 8 indicating that LTOA needed to enter into a compliance agreement within a month.

An appeal to the notice has been prepared by attorney Floyd Walker at no cost to LT residents. Many LT owners have signed on to the appeal.

The appeal argues LT is constructed of fire-resistant materials and contains emergency alarm and lighting systems, fire rated doors in stairways, a standpipe system for interior firefighting, fire extinguishers and recallable elevators.

"The Fire Marshal has previously evidenced his belief that Liberty Tower is a fire resistant building through his advisories to remove fire hoses, allowing our fire alarm to be shut off in non-adjacent spaces when the alarm is activated, and advising residents to remain in place rather

than exiting the building during a fire alarm," the appeal states.

The appeal also cites four issues: Improper notice service to the building's owners (or agents thereof), the vague definition of "high-rise" building, the ordinance title does not meet statutory requirements, and conflicting provisions within the ordinance as applied to existing buildings/uses.

The matter is expected to be heard by the city's Building, Housing and Fire Prevention Appeals Board in April. If that board fails to uphold the appeal, further appeals can be pursued through Tulsa's City Council and, if necessary, district court.

Sprinkler Meeting Focuses on Politics, Patience

Other downtown Tulsa buildings may be joining forces with Liberty Tower to fight automatic sprinkler requirements contained in the city's amendments to the International Fire Code.

Numerous residential and commercial buildings could be significantly impacted by the sprinkler amendment. LT task force members are working with Downtown Tulsa Unlimited and other residential buildings in the area to assure concerns are aired to city leaders.

"If we form a coalition, we will have a more powerful voice," said LT Board member Joe Miller, who heads the task force, at a Feb. 23 special meeting.

"We need to respond here

'We want the issue to be that this doesn't make sense.'

and now to protect our property values," Miller said. "If we can make our case to city officials, that's the way to go."

He acknowledged there are many unanswered questions. An engineering assessment is in the works to look at the impact sprinkler system installation would have on LT's facilities and finances. Information gained may be very useful in arguing LT's cause.

"We want the issue to be that this doesn't make sense," Miller said. He noted the building has only had two fires in its 40-year history

and both were limited in nature.

He also highlighted the building's fire-resistant design and its existing fire protection measures.

Miller urged residents to have patience and ignore rumors. The task force plans an open effort to keep residents informed throughout the process.

Task force member Steve Glenn circulated cards to residents at the meeting asking for contacts they have with city and community leaders. He added LT needs to be thoroughly prepared before making any public statements. The goal is to be organized with accurate information.

"The more we look into this, the more we feel we are on the right side of this," Glenn said.

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(Maintained by Bill Johnson)

Happenings ...

DOOR CLOSERS IMPORTANT

All doors to individual units from hallways must have a door closer attached to them. A recent check found about two dozen units without closers — a device in the upper corner of door that automatically closes it. This is a critical fire protection requirement. Units without door closers will need to get them reinstalled.

HOUSEKEEPING HELP

Kathleen Crist has been hired part-time to assist with housekeeping duties. Her primary work involves keeping the common areas on each floor clean — including vacuuming and dusting the hallways, and cleaning the laundry rooms. She will also be regularly cleaning in other areas of the building. The additional help will allow Willie Walker to focus on other cleaning duties on a regular basis.

NEW PHONE SYSTEM SET

The front desk and office areas will be getting a new phone system. It will replace one that is around 15 years old and has experienced numerous problems recently.

SMOKING COURTESY

Many LT residents enjoy smoking tobacco products in their units. Others enjoy the smoke-free environment in their units and in the common areas. Residents who smoke are requested to consider courtesies to their neighbors. Smoke smells filter into the hallways and ventilation systems, and can pose an annoyance to others. Any assistance in limiting these odors is appreciated. Some smokers have chosen to use their balconies for smoking. Please make sure a receptacle is available there to extinguish cigarette butts. Throwing cigarette butts over the railing is a serious safety issue. In a close-quarters community, thoughtfulness is like a breath of fresh air.

Window Sealing Work Update

Workers with First Class Glass are finishing up sealing exposed window faces on the G units and are now moving to the F units.

The work involves new caulking around each window frame and sealing around the adjacent masonry. No leaks have been reported during recent water tests.

The windows will be washed as a final touch.

Similar work will now occur with the F unit windows. The company will then move to the north side of the

building to work on exposed M and A unit window faces.

In other repairs, workers are fixing some damaged or deteriorated masonry at various spots around the building. Minor exterior concrete repairs and rusted metal painting are also planned.

The DirecTV satellite cable system is also receiving a going over to keep it in good working order. AAA TV and Satellite will also be making an assessment of the system's future in the face of coming technological changes.

Spring Storm Season Brewing

One of the most fascinating aspects of living at LT is watching thunderstorms roll by.

Although it is very unlikely that a tornado could destroy the building, high winds have been known to shatter glass in extreme cases. During such events, stay away from windows. Hallways and stairwells offer

excellent protection. The basement is also available for those who want a solid sense of security during storms.

Lightning is another storm factor to be reckoned with. Lightning bolts frequently zap past the building and have occasionally struck the upper corners. Residents should avoid standing on their balconies during lightning events.

Commentary ... Writing By The ... Letters

Many people tell me I have a way with words. As many of you know, I hold a degree in journalism and worked in the newspaper business for a number of years.

Although I believe there are gifts and talents involved in such things, a lot of what I do is a learned behavior. It certainly wasn't a planned behavior.

I always had a nose for news, but many of my hobbies and interests growing up lent themselves more to architecture, cartography or engineering. I muse that three days of college calculus dashed those dreams.

So my path to prose resulted from misgivings with mathematics. Incidentally, that's a dirty little secret of most journalists. After graduating, I had interests in attending law school. One thing led to another, however, and I ended up at a community newspaper in Sand Springs, Oklahoma.

I figured I would serve my time for a year or two, then head for something bigger and better — at least something closer to home (Yes — I'm a Yankee).

That was 22 years ago this month. I had opportunities to go to bigger places, but never better. Community journalism gave me the opportunity to lay my hands on just about every type of news story imaginable. Using great fundamentals learned in college, I was able to continually refine my reporting and writing skills there.

As time passed, I realized I needed a real job with a real retirement and benefits. Governmental work fit me well. I do a wide variety of writing in my current position — along with plenty of administrative law. I even get to dip my toes into the pools of architecture, cartography and engineering.

Of course that is sans calculus!

Andy Templeton