

6 Houlton Street
Portland, ME 04102

March 19, 2018

Kevin Hanscombe
City of Portland
Housing Safety Office
389 Congress Street
Portland, ME 04101

BY HAND

Re: CBL055 B32001; notice of violation for 6 Houlton Street

Dear Kevin:

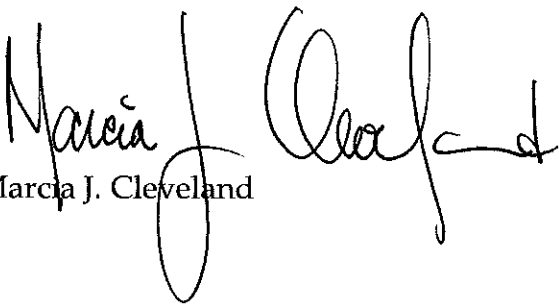
I am writing this is response to your notice of violation dated February 17, 2018. Please accept this as our plan of action as required by the Comment Section of the notice.

1. Smoke detectors. There was in fact a hard-wired smoke alarm on the first floor that you missed during your inspection. It is located on the first floor in the mud room/entryway. Thus, there was no violation related to smoke alarms. We did however hire Energize Maine, a licensed electrical contractor to install smoke/CO alarms on the first floor and basement. No permit was required because no additional wiring had to be run.
2. Fuse panel. The opening in the fuse panel has been properly closed.
3. Basement sprinklers. The sprinklers have been installed over the gas-fired (Braxi) boiler and the oil-fired steam boiler in the basement. As agreed the work was done by Daniel Paul who is a master plumber licensed in Maine.
4. Fire Doors. We are in the process of soliciting bids to install six fire doors and wall off one. We have talked to two contractors. I had hoped we would have firm estimates by now, but we have not received them. Preliminary comments from the contractors indicate the cost would be between \$7000 and \$15,000. As you know this house was built in the 1850's. The doors and walls in the hall are all original and we will certainly encounter difficulties that will cause the cost to balloon.

We request that the time to comply be extended to February 16, 2019. We need this extension for several reasons. First, my husband and I are retired and live on fixed income. We depend on renting our own unit Airbnb from June through October to cover the cost of significant improvements such as this. Second, we cannot do major renovations that would interfere with those guests. We will not have the money or the freedom to do the work until after October 31, 2018. The difficulty of hiring contractors and scheduling work over the holidays, makes it reasonable to extend the compliance deadline into the new year. Our prompt compliance with the other three items demonstrates our good faith and we approach the door issue with the same good faith.

As I mentioned during the inspection, we challenge your authority to require installation of fire doors on many grounds. I would remind you that we are not changing the use of our building or renovating it. Rather, you are using a notice of violation to compel us to do a major renovation. Extending the deadline for compliance would give us the time to resolve the issue of your authority. If you compel us to install fire doors before the question of your authority is resolved, you would expose the City of Portland to liability for damages if we ultimately prevail on the issues of authority.

Sincerely,


Marcia J. Cleveland