

November 16, 2018

City of West Allis
7525 W Greenfield Ave
West Allis, WI 53214

ATTENTION: Weed Commissioner

Dear Madam or Sir:

You may regard this as a NOTIFICATION OF CLAIM.

Most of the information concerning this claim is contained in the 2 page narrative, which is included with this Notification.

It involves the lawn work that was done, and the fact that considerable damage was done as a result of shoddy workmanship.

Moreover, no notification was received until a week AFTER the trespassing crew was sent here. This is contrary to the procedure that is supposed to be followed by the City.

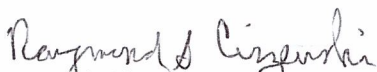
I believe the actions were over-zealous, with the end results being contrary to the stated goal.

Efforts were made to contact weed/lawn personnel. Messages were left but no responses received. Someone from public works left a message; however, it was so garbled, I couldn't understand it.

I do expect the costs of lawn repairs to be borne by the city. A main concern now is to get the basement cleaned and sanitized. As indicated, downspout extensions caused repeated water problems in the basement, causing damage to the structure and contents, many of which are collector's items.

The amount of \$350.00 that was billed and paid for should also be returned.

I do expect this matter will be handled promptly and properly.


Raymond Ciszewski, Trust Administrator
2487 South 99th Street
West Allis, WI 53227-2243

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NOV 29 2018

WEST ALLIS
CITY ATTORNEY

CITY OF WEST ALLIS
BLDG. & ZONING

NOV 27 2018

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TIME _____ PER 

Phone: 414-327-6337

Email: ssider60@sbcglobal.net

This is a difficult letter to write primarily because I'm still upset about how the matter of lawns was handled.

First of all, it's my understanding that a notice was to be sent by the city to advise people to cut their lawns and handle weed control.

To my horrible surprise, I came home only to find the lawn had been "cut" by a city crew (or a subcontractor) without notice. About a week later, the letter from the city was received. This seemed to be a case of shooting first and asking questions later. I have to wonder if the people who attempted the lawn cutting have had any experience in this type of work. I refer to this crew as "Lawn Butchers".

The appearance afterward was horrible. There was no professionalism detectable in what they had done. They concentrated on the back yard, which is visible to only 2 neighbors (hardly "blight" in the grand scheme of things). Is this the image West Allis is seeking?

I called the city anonymously to determine what would be regarded as sufficient efforts. The conversation involved weeds – that they cannot be destroyed in 3 days – it is a process. Lawn cutting? For both lawn and weeds, I was told that if there was evidence of work being performed, we would be left alone. Well, that didn't happen either.

As you are aware, there were several days of rainfall in the early part of September. Obviously, a wet lawn is not mowed easily. Also, I became ill to the point it was necessary to visit the Veterans' Administration emergency room for influenza-type symptoms. The doctors ordered "lots of rest", which all told was about 3 weeks. For these primary reasons, yard work was obviously in progress, but not finished. The initial weed treatment didn't work well at all, so another treatment became necessary. Unfortunately, the chemicals had little chance to be effective due to the city's cutting.

Several other problems were created by their "work". The grass clearly was not bagged or mulched. There were large areas where large clumps of grass clippings were left on top of the lawn, effectively killing parts of the lawn. Apparently dried up grass is appealing to the city and adds to the beautification of West Allis.

It was obvious that work was in progress. The front yard was completely mowed, as was part of the back yard. An empty weed-killing chemical container was plainly visible outside. In addition to circumstances cited above, another problem arising around September each year is falling apples and pears from fruit trees. I take painstaking efforts and a lot of time to pick up the fallen fruit and move it to the evergreen trees for composting. Yes, this is time consuming; however, necessary for PROPER lawn care. Instead, the Lawn Butchers did NOT pick up the fallen fruit, so the ground area in and around the tree ended up with "applesauce" on it – another lawn killer. Bare patches still remain. Another "beautification" effort? It's not easy to pick up squashed fruit on a lawn.

Weeds that were cut were left on the lawn or strewn about, causing the need for me to hand-pick them.

The worst is yet to come. There are 2 downspout extensions at the northwest corner of the home. Both of them lead to lawn areas. One extension was moved by them. It was curved and set closer to the home – off of the lawn area. The 2d one was disconnected completely and NOT reset when they were done.

What happened because of this? With the rainfalls, the water did NOT drain onto the lawn. Instead, it

saturated the ground and caused seepage into the basement, which previously was dry. I hadn't noticed this right away, not having gone into the basement for several days. I became concerned when there were musty odors emanating from the basement, and doors on the main level expanded and couldn't be closed properly. A trip to the basement was shocking. Large areas of the floor were wet, and I noticed a lot of contents were coated with mold/mildew.

This required the use (and cost) of drying equipment (air movers and dehumidifying equipment). It took several days to reduce the moisture to a normal level.

Because of allergies, and other undesirable effects of mold/mildew, it will be necessary to have the basement and all of its contents thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Sadly, there are items that will have to be destroyed because of this problem. A lot of collectibles are stored there – no doubt the value of many will be diminished. Some tools seem to have fresh rust on them.

At this point, I am requesting a claim representative from the city's insurance carrier to view the damage. If the city is self-insured, an appropriate city employee should be appointed to handle this claim. Because of the nature and extent of the problems caused by the city, the cost is estimated to be several thousands of dollars. The furnace duct work will need to be cleaned and sealed as well.

The city is responsible for this, considering the work was neither solicited or approved by me. It was done at the city's initiative.

Some of the costs incurred thus far are for the downspout connector and extension. An estimate for lawn thatching in the back yard is \$100.00, and the basement cleaning/sanitizing is still pending.

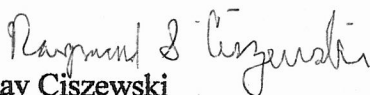
Of course, I would expect that the \$350.00 paid for the so-called lawn work will be refunded.

The city has apparently taken a heavy handed approach to this perceived problem. It apparently is not a widespread problem. Because of that, there are more citizen-friendly approaches that would certainly enhance the city's image as one that helps its citizens, rather than be a punitive one. I would urge the city officials to devise such a plan. Moreover, conflicting and misleading information should NOT be disseminated. Information presented my phone call was in complete opposition to what actually occurred.

In the future, I would hope that the city would ensure the qualifications of either their employees who did this work, or its subcontractors.

I am also requesting the name, address, and phone number of the subcontractor (if a sub was used). Their insurance carrier must also be involved.

I trust that efforts to resolve this matter will be initiated promptly.


Ray Ciszewski
2487 S 99th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53227-2243

CC: Mayor Devine

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Mr. Raymond S. Ciszewski
2487 S 99th St
Milwaukee, WI 53227

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NOV 23 2010

CITY OF WEST ALLIS
9525 W GREENFIELD
WEST ALLIS, WI

CITY OF WEST ALLIS
DTW

ATTN: PUBLIC WORKS

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