

NUISANCE BY-LAW

City of Framingham By-Laws, Article V. “Health and Safety”

Section 22 Nuisance

Bylaw [Adopted: Article 24, Annual
Town Meeting, 2002] Approved by the
Attorney General on 7/1/02

Section 22. Nuisance Bylaw

22.1 Authority and Purpose

Pursuant to the general powers granted to cities and towns by Article 89 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution, and the specific powers granted by M.G.L., Ch. 139, ss. 1-3A, this bylaw is adopted for the prevention of future nuisances and the removal of existing nuisances within the Town, which nuisances constitute a hazard of blight, or adversely affect property values.

22.2 Definitions

22.2.1 Blight

Any condition that seriously impairs the value, condition, strength, durability, or appearance of real property, or is otherwise detrimental to property values or neighboring properties including real property owned or occupied by an Interested Party as defined in Section 22.2.5 below.

22.2.2 Building

A structure, whether portable or fixed, with exterior walls or firewalls and a roof, built, erected or framed, of a combination of any materials, to form shelter for persons, animals, or property. See “structure” below.

22.2.3 Dilapidated

A condition of decay or partial ruin due to neglect, misuse, or deterioration. The term includes, but is not limited to:

- a) Property having deteriorated or ineffective waterproofing of exterior walls, roofs, foundations, or floors, including broken or inadequately secured windows or doors;
- b) Property having defective weather protection (such as paint, stain, siding or tarpaulin) for exterior wall covering; deleterious weathering due to lack of such weather protection or other protective covering.
- c) Personal property that is broken, rusted, worn, partially or wholly dismantled or otherwise due to deterioration is unsuitable for the purpose for which designed.
- d) Property having a paved parking lot or a parking area in a deteriorated condition causing hazardous conditions to automobiles, bicycles, or pedestrians. Such conditions may include but are not limited to potholes, broken pavement, and/or insufficient drainage so as to cause flooding.

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22.2.4 Hazard

A condition likely to expose persons to injury, or property to damage, loss or destruction.

22.2.5 Interested Parties

In connection with the notification requirements of this bylaw Interested Parties are the Building Commissioner; owner(s) and/or occupants of property which is the subject of a hearing; owners and/or occupants of property directly opposite the subject property on any public or private street or way, owners and/or occupants of property abutting the subject property, and owners and/or occupants of abutting property that is within 300 feet of, the property line of the subject property. Other persons who own or occupy property and who demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Building Commissioner that they are affected by the condition of the property or building that is the subject of a hearing may be regarded as Interested Parties by the Building Commissioner.

22.2.6 Nuisance

Any substantial interference with the common interest of the general public in maintaining safe and sanitary structures and neighborhoods that are not dilapidated when such interference results from the hazardous or blighted condition of private property, land or buildings. The fact that a particular structure or use may be permitted under the zoning bylaw does not create an exemption from the application of this bylaw. The term includes but is not limited to:

- a) burned structures not otherwise lawfully habitable or usable,
- b) dilapidated real or personal property including but not limited to real or personal property containing graffiti, tagging or similar markings,
- c) dilapidated real or personal property including parking lots or parking areas, dangerous or unsafe structures or personal property, **(Attorney General approval of Article 11 of the October 21, 2014 Special Town Meeting)**
- d) overgrown vegetation which may harbor rats and vermin, conceal pools of stagnant water or other nuisances, or which is otherwise detrimental to neighboring properties or property values,
- e) dead, decayed, diseased or hazardous trees,
- f) personal property that is exposed to the elements without protection against deterioration, rust or dilapidation,
- g) vehicles, machinery or mechanical equipment or parts thereof that are located on soil, grass or other porous surfaces that are likely to result in the destruction of vegetation or contamination of soil,
- h) in any Residence District, keeping of more than one commercial vehicle, or of a tractor that exceeds a gross vehicle weight of three-quarters (3/4) of a ton for hauling a van or trailer as defined by the Registry of Motor Vehicles,
- i) trash, debris or personal property, including but not limited to personal property marked "free" or "take" that has been placed for collection as rubbish or refuse in violation of Town of Framingham policies as approved by the Director of Public Works.

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22.2.7 Occupant

A person who occupies real property with the consent of the owner as a lessee, tenant at will, licensee or otherwise. The singular use of the term includes the plural when the context so indicates.

22.2.6 Owner

Every person who alone or jointly or severally with others:

- a) has legal title to any building, structure or property to this Bylaw
- b) has care, charge, or control of any such building structure or property in any capacity including but not limited to agent, executor, executrix, administrator, administratrix, trustee or guardian of the estate of the holder of legal title
- c) is a lessee under a written letter agreement
- d) has a mortgagee in possession
- e) is an agent, trustee or other person appointed by the courts.

22.2.9 Responsible Party

The owner or occupant (in the case of real property) of property that is the subject of proceedings under this bylaw. The singular use of the term includes the plural when the context so indicates.

22.2.10 Structure

A combination of materials, whether wholly or partially level with, above or below the surface of the ground, whether permanent or temporary, assembled at a fixed location to give support, shelter or enclosure such as a building, (see above), framework, retaining wall, stand, platform, bin, fence (having a height at any point of six feet or greater above grade), parking area sign, flagpole, or mast for an antenna or the like.

- **Enforcement**

This Bylaw shall be enforced by the Building Commissioner. If the Building Commissioner shall be informed or have reason to believe that any provision of this Bylaw has been, is being, or is likely to be violated, he shall make or cause to be made an investigation of the facts, including an investigation of the property where the violation may exist. If he finds any violation he shall give immediate notice in writing to the Owner and to the Occupant of the premises to immediately cease such violation. In making such inspection, the Building Commissioner shall have such right of access to premises that may be lawfully exercised by him under the laws and constitution of the Commonwealth or of the United States.

If, after such notice and order, such violation continued, or if any Owner or Occupant fails to obey any lawful order of the Building Commissioner with respect to any violation of the provisions of the Bylaw, the Building Commissioner may make complaint to the Superior Court or any court of competent jurisdiction for any injunction or order restraining any further use of the premises and the continuation of the violation and shall take such other action as is necessary to enforce the provisions of this Bylaw.

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In addition to the foregoing remedy, whoever violates any provision of this Bylaw or fails to obey any lawful order issued by the Building Commissioner in enforcing this Bylaw shall be liable to a fine of not more than three hundred dollars (\$300) for each violation. Each violation of this Bylaw shall constitute a separate offense. Each day that any such violation continues shall constitute a separate offense. Condition may warrant immediate action, constitute a substantial violation of this Bylaw, or adversely affect protected interests of others than the complainant, the Building Commissioner may commence action under this Bylaw without requiring the disclosure of the identity of the complainant.

If the Building Commissioner determines that the condition is subject to the jurisdiction of the Board of Health or is a violation of the State Sanitary Code or any health regulation, in addition to enforcing this Bylaw, he shall refer the matter to the Director of Public Health of the town or other appropriate state or town officials for action.

During his investigation of the matter, the Building Commissioner may consult, but is not required to do so, with any Interested Party in an attempt to obtain voluntary compliance with this Bylaw without the need to issue a notice of violation.

22.3.2 Notice to Complainant

In any matter in which a complaint has been made by a person other than the Building Commissioner, the Building Commissioner, if requested, shall promptly notify the

23.3.3 Removal of Nuisance by Council

If the Responsible Party fails to remedy the nuisance upon notice from the Building Commissioner to do so, the Council may cause the nuisance to be removed as provided in M.G.L., Ch. 139.

23.3.4 Review by the Mayor

Any Interested Party who has filed a written complaint of a nuisance with the Building Commissioner upon which complaint the Building Commissioner has determined that the condition is not a nuisance, or has taken other action that the Interested Party claims is inadequate shall have a right to a review of the matter by the Mayor. At the request of such an Interested Party, the Town Manager shall confer with the Building Commissioner and shall recommend appropriate action to the Building Commissioner and to the Council

22.3.5 Reports by Building Commissioner

The Building Commissioner shall file with the Town Manager each month a report that shall include all complaints of nuisance made to him during the prior month; all proceedings begun by him under this Bylaw; all pending complaints and all investigations and enforcement actions taken by him or referred to the Commissioner of Public Health. The report shall state the location of the premises, a summary of the nature of the complaint, the name of the Responsible Party(ies), and the disposition or the status of the matter.

