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FOR INFORMATION CALL

September 8, 2023

Ald. Robert J. Bauman
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Ald. Bauman seeks answers after DNS evacuates, shutter SoHi District apartment building

Alderman Robert J. Bauman is seeking answers from the Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS), following the sudden evacuation and closure this week of a large apartment building near N. 27th and W. Wells Streets in the 4th Aldermanic District.

Media reports say DNS evacuated all residents in the 16 units of the SoHi Lofts building, 2632 W. Wells St., on Wednesday, September 6, after the building's owner failed to secure necessary permits to repair conditions that could be potentially deadly – including lacking minimum entrances and exits (points of egress) that would allow escape in the event of a fire.

Reports state that according to city documents, the issues include steel-framed exterior walkways on the east side of the building, along with rusty scaffolding. Tenants report the only elevator in the building is broken, and rusted stairs have fallen from the building.

“I live two blocks away from this building and I am deeply disturbed over how this has been dealt with from a communications standpoint by DNS,” he said.

“I am told that DNS issued an emergency order on August 31 yet I only learned about this evacuation yesterday while watching the Ten O'clock News,” Alderman Bauman said. “This is outrageous. Moreover, the city has invested millions of dollars in this property over the last 25 years to provide quality affordable housing. I have great concerns about how this project has been supervised by city departments. Finally I will demand that the current ownership of this building provide appropriate compensation to the tenants who are now barred from returning to their homes.”

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