

Landlord responds to critique

Stewart says he is repairing buildings, investing in Malone

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The Telegram

A local landlord defended himself at the Malone Village Board of Trustees meeting Monday night in response to past presentations made by citizens that criticized landlords and the apartments they rent.

Some residents, however, are still concerned with some rental properties in the village of Malone.

Jack Stewart, who said he owns around 30 apartments within the Malone area, cited presentations made by concerned residents at board meetings on May 14 and 29 in which a community member described how feels housing should be improved in Malone, especially for those housed through the Department of Social Services (DSS).

Stewart talked to the board in response to the articles he read in the Telegram about several presentations on local landlords.

"About 10 years ago, I started investing in Malone," he said. "I own many buildings ... I grew up in Malone."

Stewart mentioned how reading about the presentations in the Telegram concerned him.

"I take offense when I read about it in the paper," he said.

Stewart went on to say he has been working on repairing the

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roofs to his rental properties and that he soon wants to repair the siding and windows. He also said he is not required to provide stoves and utilities for his rentals.

"When utilities got too high [to provide], I dropped people's rents," he said.

Stewart said that when people call him with issues in the apartments he owns, he responds to their calls.

"When they got a heating problem, I go," he said. "When they got a toilet problem, I go."

Stewart then referred to Calvin Martin, who was the main presenter to the board about his concerns for the community. Martin stood books up during his first presentation on May 14 to represent what he felt were properties up to code and laid books down to represent those he felt did not meet code. Stewart said the young couple that sat in front of the board during its May 29 meeting and talked about the conditions of their apartment live in one of the apartments he owns.

"I confronted the man who came here and knocked over the books," said Stewart. "I confronted him and he wouldn't talk to me."

He said he believes he can make changes to the properties he owns.

"I like the apartments and I can make them look nice," Stewart said.

Trustee Dan Marlow then questioned Stewart about working with the code office.

"If there are situations you have to address, you have no problem working with code enforcement?" he asked.

Stewart replied that he did not.

Trustee Hugh Hill then talked to Stewart about the board's feelings towards local landlords.

"We are doing our best to help people like you stay in business," he said.

Sally LePine, a resident of Malone, then addressed Stewart about 525 E. Main St., one of the buildings he now owns, which was then 216 E. Main St.

"I would like to say I lived

in that property from age two until I was married," she said. "I've never seen it like this. ... That was a beautiful, beautiful place. It just makes us who lived there feel terrible."

LePine then talked about how renters of 525 E. Main St. leave laundry hanging on the front porch, and other things about the property that concern her. She said it used to not be that way.

Hill talked to Stewart about taking into consideration the feelings of community members.

"I know your hands are full with the upkeep of these properties," he said. "As a landlord, you have to take into consideration how people feel."

Marlow then suggested to Stewart that he address the issues with the current properties he owns before buying

any more. Stewart then talked about the future of his properties.

"I got no problem working

on these properties," he said.

Mayor Todd LePine said the board would continue working on code issues.

"We're just going to address the issues we have and move on," he said.

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