

657A.10A Petition by city for title to abandoned property.

1. In lieu of the procedures in sections 657A.2 through 657A.10, a city in which an abandoned building is located may petition the court to enter judgment awarding title to the abandoned property to the city. A petition filed under this section shall include the legal description of the abandoned property. If more than one abandoned building is located on a parcel of real estate, the city may combine the actions into one petition. The owner of the building and grounds, mortgagees of record, lienholders of record, or other known persons who hold an interest in the property shall be named as respondents on the petition.

The petition shall be filed in the district court of the county in which the property is located. Service on the owner and any other named respondents shall be by certified mail and by posting the notice in a conspicuous place on the building. The action shall be in equity.

2. Not sooner than sixty days after the filing of the petition, the city may request a hearing on the petition.

3. In determining whether a property has been abandoned, the court shall consider the following for each building that is located on the property and named in the petition and the building grounds:

a. Whether any property taxes or special assessments on the property were delinquent at the time the petition was filed.

b. Whether any utilities are currently being provided to the property.

c. Whether the building is unoccupied by the owner or lessees or licensees of the owner.

d. Whether the building meets the city's housing code for being fit for human habitation, occupancy, or use.

e. Whether the building is exposed to the elements such that deterioration of the building is occurring.

f. Whether the building is boarded up.

g. Past efforts to rehabilitate the building and grounds.

h. The presence of vermin, accumulation of debris, and uncut vegetation.

i. The effort expended by the petitioning city to maintain the building and grounds.

j. Past and current compliance with orders of the local housing official.

k. Any other evidence the court deems relevant.

4. In lieu of the considerations in subsection 3, if the city can establish to the court's satisfaction that all parties with an interest in the property have received proper notice and either consented to the entry of an order awarding title to the property to the city or did not make a good faith effort to comply with the order of the local housing official within sixty days after the filing of the petition, the court shall enter judgment against the respondents granting the city title to the property.

5. If the court determines that the property has been abandoned or that subsection 4 applies, the court shall enter judgment awarding title to the city. The title awarded to the city shall be free and clear of any claims, liens, or encumbrances held by the respondents.

6. If a city files a petition under subsection 1, naming the holder of a tax sale certificate of purchase for the property as a respondent, the city shall also file the petition, along with a verified statement declaring that the property identified in the petition contains an abandoned building, with the county treasurer. Upon receiving the petition and verified statement, the county treasurer shall make an entry in the county system canceling the sale of the property and shall refund the purchase money to the tax sale certificate holder.

2004 Acts, ch 1165, §10, 11; 2010 Acts, ch 1050, §11, 12

Referred to in §448.13