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CITY OF ORONO

May 15, 2008

Orono Public Works
2700 Kelley Parkway
P.O. Box # 66
Crystal Bay, MN 55323

RE: City Lakeside fire lane adjacent to 1310 Spruce Place

Dear Public Works guys:

I live at 1310 Spruce Place, Orono.

Thanks for the call yesterday regarding this.
The pathway will be cleaned up by the weekend.

Simply for FYI:

The structure at 1310 Spruce Place (according to the tax statement) dated back to the 1940's. The City Property has basically been allowed to deteriorate and has been used as a landfill for area homes.

When the home to the South was constructed last year, Bruce Vang wanted a truckload of boulders dumped at the Lakeside inlet area of the "drainage creek" for silt and erosion / damage control. We installed an erosion blanket and covered it with another load of rocks to further stop the erosion of the soils where the creek would occasionally flush heavy amounts of water onto the shoreline. The beach is finally returning back to a usable condition for the neighborhood kids. Each day I still find a few nails, ceramic dishware pieces, and glass that wash up to the surface of the sands. Up until now – path or no path – the beach was 100% unusable except for kids' smoking, drinking, or rifling the boats for booze.

Since then we "played" with the area. We removed a lot of Buckthorn, construction debris including carpet, ceramic tiles of all sorts, pipes, and a lot of just basic junk that was lying around or partially exposed in the ground. Many wheelbarrows of junk were taken out of the "creek" including broken glass, barbed wire, iron posts, etc. The black dirt it runs thru erodes easily, and a lot of the landscape rock that was on the hillsides was placed into the creek-bed to get a handle on this. This area was "cleaned up" perhaps for the first time since the Indians.

The Poison Ivy has been harvested annually and replaced with grass seed and a lot of wild flowers and Hasta. Most of the poison ivy is currently on me to prove this fact - with 2 more days scheduled to harvest the balance of it.

It is finally controllable once again – the assessor liked it so much he jacked my taxes!!! The neighbors that have adjacent City Property are keeping those properties properly mowed and groomed; and the people that are all aware of the land use it for their walking efforts through the “woods” and back and forth from Cherry to Spruce (or visa versa). They even installed a “dock” across the creek bed down by the Cherry Place lift station for crossing.

It is fun to see activity around. That said; if any more neighbors comment on my efforts I would hope that you will tell them to contact me directly so I can recruit help with the policing of the glass on the Beach and the harvesting of the Poison Ivy, etc – I can use the help maintaining the property as the other neighbors are maintaining the City Properties adjacent to them! I am not a “territorial” type of guy; and know it is City land for common enjoyment (yet currently up to the neighborhood to maintain as Lakeshore access but without any parking capabilities).

Have a good day. I appreciate your comments in the phone conversation.
Very truly yours,
Jeffrey Gustafson