

**MINUTES OF THE PLUMBING AND FUEL GAS BOARD MEETING
LUGM MIDDLE CONFERENCE ROOM * LEONARDTOWN, MARYLAND
Wednesday, October 10, 2007**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Gerald Davis at 6:10 p.m. Members present were Bernie Taylor, Daryl Calvano, Charles Downs, Dwight Mason. Members absent were David Shapiro and Mike Sullivan. LUGM staff present was Adam Knight. Others present were Susan Pearce-Ditch, Brian Ditch and Ken Moore of MDIA.

Check and Copy IDs: Mr. Knight provided copies of the IDs.

Check and Copy Master Plumbing License: Mr. Davis stated we were expecting to hear from the Master Plumber and the Plaintiff. Mr. Davis stated the plumber is on vacation so we will hear from the plaintiff only tonight.

Swearing-In of Persons Testifying Before the Board: Ms. Susan Pearce-Ditch, Mr. Davis, and Adam Knight were sworn in.

Explanation of Process: Mr. Davis explained the rules of conduct of the process.

Ms. Susan Pearce-Ditch Testimony: Ms. Pearce-Ditch 26120 Jones Warf Road, Hollywood, MD 20636 is the property in question. Ms. Pearce-Ditch stated her residence location is 42256 River Ridge Drive, Hollywood, MD 20636. Ms. Pearce-Ditch introduced her husband Mr. Brian Ditch.

Mr. Knight stated a letter was sent to the Master Plumber and the property owner requiring them to appear before us tonight and asked for a brief statement as to why Ms. Pearce-Ditch is testifying tonight.

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: The Company I contracted to do the work, On The Spot Plumbing, from what I understand, the license is held by someone else, a Mr. Higgins. Mr. Godecki is not a master plumber, am I correct, in that or do we know?

Mr. Knight: We would rather not answer that question right now. The reason being for that is we havent given him a chance to speak, however were also checking with Maryland State Plumbing Board. We are following up with the state regs to see if he is in order.

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: I am a little naive I guess about who needs to be licensed for what and to do what.

Mr. Knight: You believe you hired a licensed plumber?

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: That is correct. Just briefly in synopsis on July 31st I have a pet kennel, I felt the need to call a plumber at that time. I thought we had a main service line leak. The service line running from the house next to the kennel building. Contacted one plumber, who stopped out, wouldnt be able to get his estimator out till the next day. I felt it was urgent, we were our busiest time of year, needed water. I felt it was urgent so I contacted On The Spot Plumbing and they sent someone named Michael out very quickly, responsibly, he was very professional. How much detail?

Mr. Knight: Bottom line you thought you had an emergency, you contacted a plumber.

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: I was told they would start that day. I assumed it to be a couple days job water service line. I had some experience with pipe and water. I worked for utility for many years; actually I have a background in water quality for about 20 years before I did kennels, so I know a little about pipes. At the end of the day couldnt start whatever had come up, he did stop out that afternoon. The original person that came out from On The Spot named Michael gave me a synopsis of how they were going to perform the job. He contacted Norman Godecki on the cell phone, said they were going to start that afternoon, Im like great, and gave me a price. I knew it was high but we were busy and I was in a hurry, I didnt take time to do estimates as I should have but Norman, I guess reminded me, being out there before, and I hadnt remembered a horror

story from before so I was like, OK, well lets just do it, lets go with it, lets get it done. That late afternoon Norman stopped out, Im not gonna run the pipe like that, that guy didnt know what he was talking about, referring to Michael, his estimator. He was going to have to jackhammer through the building after all, which is what we were trying to avoid because of the pets, obviously creating a lot of stress.

Mr. Knight: Lets fast forward a little bit. Youre bringing a case to the board for what you believe to be unprofessionalism, and his not installing according to the State Plumbing Code or the County Plumbing Code.

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: The manner in which he ultimately decided to perform the job was completely different from what I agreed to in the time frame. I was told it was going to be started that day; it actually didnt start till the next morning. What caused me to call your office was it wasnt even 12 inches deep in just a visual appearance and it would freeze so I contacted you.

Mr. Knight: Bottom line thats why you forwarded the complaint to the State and to the County.

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: The job took an excessive amount of time. The job was handled sloppily; I felt Mr. Godecki was particularly rude. I tried to communicate with him at every time we had a barrier or an obstacle. There were a number of things that happened and went wrong outlined in that letter. I was unable to communicate with Mr. Godecki in a manner I was satisfied with so I did solicit the help of Mr. Johnson and Mr. Knight which brought us to this point.

Mr. Knight: You received a letter from me last week?

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: Correct, the first part of this week.

Mr. Knight: Your appearing before the board as you were requested.

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: Yes, I just didnt felt it needed to be brought to somebodys attention, I just didnt feel it was a professional job. He has been paid in full.

Mr. Knight: I did ask that Mr. Ditch appear before us and I did require that Mr. Higgins appear before us. I got a phone call this morning at 8:34 with a message that stated, Just got your letter on Monday and Mike is out of town until Friday, he cant come to meeting tonight please call. So I had my Secretary call and I confused Godecki with Higgins but she did mention Mike. And the reason why Ive asked Ms. Ditch to come is because of what she is going to tell us now.

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: My understanding is Norman Godecki is the owner of On The Spot Plumbing. It was also my understanding Mr. Godecki is also a Master Plumber and Licensed Plumber although he did not ever state at any time Im a Master Plumber. He did constantly remind me of his resume and hes been a plumber for 26 years, so throughout the whole job I assumed him to be a plumber. I also got the impression from Michael (the estimator) who I was under the impression he was the Master Plumber. He said he just comes out to help Norman although I cant say whether or not he used the words Im a Master Plumber. This scenario I thought the estimator was Michael Higgins the Master Plumber. Yesterday evening about 6:30 a gentleman pulls up to the kennel, were closed as it says on the door; he walks right into the building and starts asking about firewood. Im a little confused at this point, this seems really odd. I had no idea who this gentleman was until he introduces himself as Michael Higgins. I asked are you related to Norman, are you with the plumber? He said I hold the Master Plumber license. I think he was up there to get information. He really didnt know who I was or I imagine he received a letter about this meeting. I am concerned at this point because Im not sure who Michael Higgins is. I did ask him to provide some type of identification and I made a copy for the board. If the information is correct this is Michael Higgins, Master Plumber who I have never seen before last night. In the letter that you have from me I am referring to a Michael Higgins that is the estimator, apparently.

Mr. Knight: How did you obtain this information?

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: This gentleman at my door last night who had me a little nervous because I didnt know who he was so I asked for identification and he provided it to me. I copied the ID and wrote his tag number down because frankly I dont know whos who and he did indicate he was going to come back up on the property. It just made me a little nervous.

Mr. Knight: Save that for the next meeting. Anything else?

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: The gentleman last night said he had some issues in the past, he just holds the license nobodys ever gotten into the detail that I have. He really was hoping, he thinks he needs to cut Norman loose. We talked at length he seems to be relieved after we talked we shook hands he said thank you for the information, Im not going to be able to make it to the meeting tonight. He had made some other commitments with a work release church program that hes in.

At that point I still didnt know who he was and I just wanted him to leave because I was confused as to whos who. Yes, this is a dog kennel building but the entire job was handled very shoddily.

Mr. Knight: did Mr. Higgins comment on that?

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: At that point he realized I need to get with Norman and see what the story is. I showed him where holes had been punched in the wall. They didnt even use a hole saw, they ran a hammer through the wall.

Ms. Pearce-Ditch provided the board with a letter she received from the state and some better copied pictures.

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: The property had just been marked by a private utility company.

Mr. Davis: Did you call for them to issue a ticket.

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: I did.

Mr. Davis: You called Miss Utility, so the marks that were there existing when the plumbers showed up. At any time did the plumber call for Miss Utility?

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: Not to my knowledge. There was also no permit. Who is supposed to sign the permit?

Mr. Davis: The master plumber.

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: This gentleman yesterday did say I never signed a permit. I would like to know who signed the permit.

Mr. Knight: Thats part of the investigation.

Mr. Davis: He made that comment to you that he never signed the permit?

Ms. Pearce-Ditch: Yes, he made this comment to me. He knew nothing about me or anything else that was going on. Was he required at any time to come out and oversee the job?

Mr. Knight: Your statements are very helpful. We are seeing a discrepancy in what you were told and what I was told.

Mr. Davis: Is there any other evidence that you want the board to consider?

Ms. Pearce-Ditch provided the board with better copies of the job order and more photos. Mr. Knight explained what will happen at the next meeting. Mr. Davis stated between now and the time of the next meeting if there is anything that we need to clear up or possibly ask you, would it be ok if Mr. Knight contacted you? Ms. Pearce-Ditch stated this was fine. Ms. Pearce-Ditch stated she has nothing to gain financially from this and will not pursue it beyond this. Mr. Davis thanked Ms. Pearce-Ditch for bringing this to the boards attention.

Board will Review the Testimony and Send-Out a Ruling Letter:

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of September as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Update on the Ordinance and the By-Laws for the Board: Knight stated he is waiting to hear back regarding the public hearing with the Commissioners. Mr. Knight stated once he gets a date he will advertise the hearing two weeks prior. Mr. Davis asked about the State Board. Mr. Knight stated the State Board has asked for an agenda of what we would like to cover during the meeting.

Update on Meeting with the State Plumbing Board (date): Mr. Davis read the proposed letter addressed to the State Plumbing Board in regards to the list of questions they requested.

Review the New Plumbing and Fuel Gas Rules and Regulations: Mr. Davis stated he is involved in the AGA meetings and in the next cycle you will see excess flow valves on house lines. Mr. Davis stated there are two versions of this. Mr. Davis explained standard excess flow valves and excess flow valves with a bypass for five cubic feet of gas. Mr. Davis stated he will be attending AGA meeting again tomorrow and will hopefully get more information.

New Business

A motion was made and seconded to invite both Mr. Godecki and Mr. Higgins to the next meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Knight stated he would contact Ms. Pearce-Ditch, Mr. Godecki, and Mr. Higgins in regards to the next meeting to be held on November 14, 2007.

Adjourn: A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Jada Stuckert
Recording Secretary

Approved in open session: March 12, 2008

Gerald Davis
Chairman