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Threat of municipal citation dropped after site cleared; three cars destroyed when torch sets off fire at unit

A little tidying up at the Port Grandview storage condominium property on Meadowlark Road was enough to satisfy Village of Fredonia officials.

Earlier in the month, officials threatened to issue citations against the owners of the storage business after receiving a complaint from a neighbor about the cluttered conditions on the property.

Neighbor Mary Bohn said a variety of items -— including a trailer, junked car and old school bus — were being stored outside on the property, which abuts her Town of Saukville home.

Officials noted that the conditional-use permit which allows the storage units strictly prohibits outside storage. They threatened to fine the property owners unless the site was cleared this month.

Owner Mike Didier explained that the equipment on the property was being stored temporarily until a new storage building could be erected. That construction was expected to take a couple of weeks.

After receiving a notice from the village of a possible citation, the property was cleaned up, with the exception of one large piece of landscaping equipment.

Roger Strohm, the village public works director, said the hulking earth mover is owned by a landscaping business and is probably stuck for the winter.

“He’d like to leave it there until spring, after the freeze,” Strohm said.

Village President Chuck Lapicola said he was content with the appearance of the property now.

“It looks like he cleaned everything up. It looks a lot better compared to what it was,” Lapicola said.

The storage condo business has been in operation since 2006.

Assistant Fire Chief Chris Kunstmann also told officials the Port Grandview property was the scene of an accidental fire on Saturday, Jan. 12.

“One of the guys who has a unit there was working with an acetylene torch and got a little too close to the cars he was storing there,” Kunstmann said.

Three vehicles stored in the unit were destroyed. Firefighters spent three hours at the scene.

The fire prompted village officials to ask if there was concern that flammable materials were being stored in the units.

Kunstmann said the department is satisfied there is no apparent risk from the storage business.

“For the most part, the units are no different that anyone’s garage. They may have paint, lighter fluid or a can of gasoline. We are not aware of anything unusual,” he said.

The storage business is inspected by the fire department twice a year for apparent hazards.

Lapicola also clarified that tenants of the storage units are prohibited from operating businesses at the property.

“If a guy wants to work on his car in one of the units, that’s fine. It is different if he is doing body work on other people’s vehicles,” he said.