IRON RIVER—Blight issues remain a concern for city officials.

“I want to hire a blight officer who will write citations, and I want the city police to enforce them,” Mayor Terry Tarsi said after a special City Council meeting Feb. 6. “I want real enforcement.”

__PUBLIC__

Tarsi said abandoned homes coupled with junked cars, old mattresses, discarded appliances and trash litters many properties in Iron River.

City Manager Perry Franzoi agrees. “I think this should be a priority in the coming fiscal year,” he said. “I think we need to address this,” he told the council.

Tarsi said city bylaws allow for a blight officer. But he said that six months ago, when he asked for information about blight citations, the blight officer resigned, and neither the number of citations issued nor the results of the citations has been forthcoming.

Tarsi said the site of the former Coast to Coast Store on Genesee Street exemplifies the problem.

“We could look at the sawhorses and yellow tape on the sidewalks or we could be progressive and look to the future,” the mayor said.

Civil counsel Mark Tousignant said about $700 in fines have been levied against owner Britney Hoeffler, owner of the building that housed the Coast to Coast store. According to Iron County court information, Hoeffler continues making payment on the remaining two of the four citations.

“We’re looking at doing things a little different,” Franzoi said. ‘We’re looking at more police involvement, at revamping our procedures. We want to streamline our enforcement and make it more effective.”

The city manager added that community development block grant funds from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation may be available, but those monies are earmarked for stabilization and development of old buildings, not demolition.