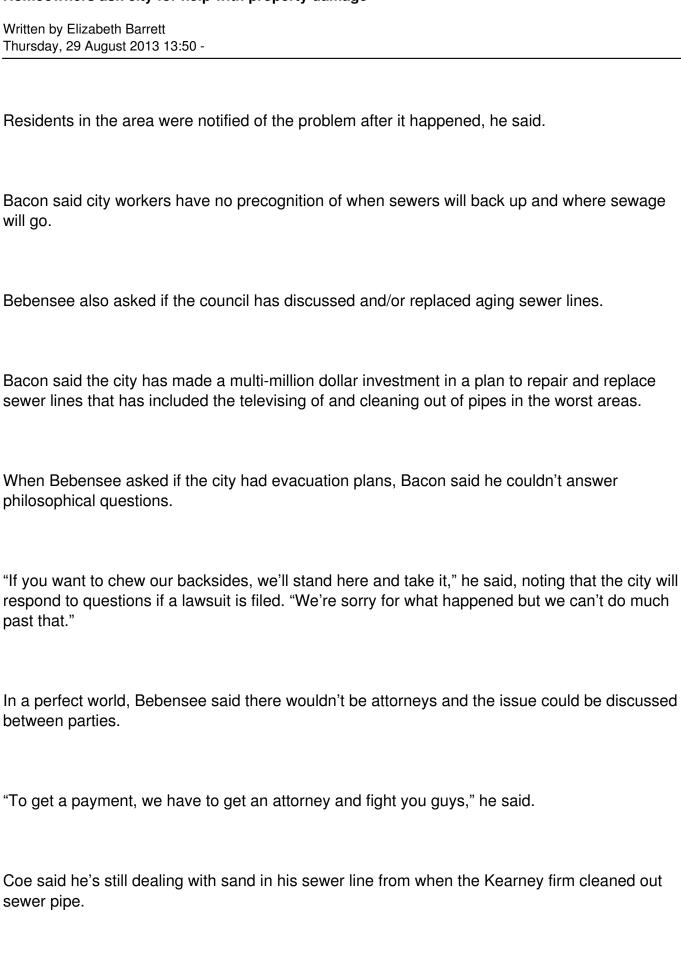
Written by Elizabeth Barrett Thursday, 29 August 2013 13:50 -

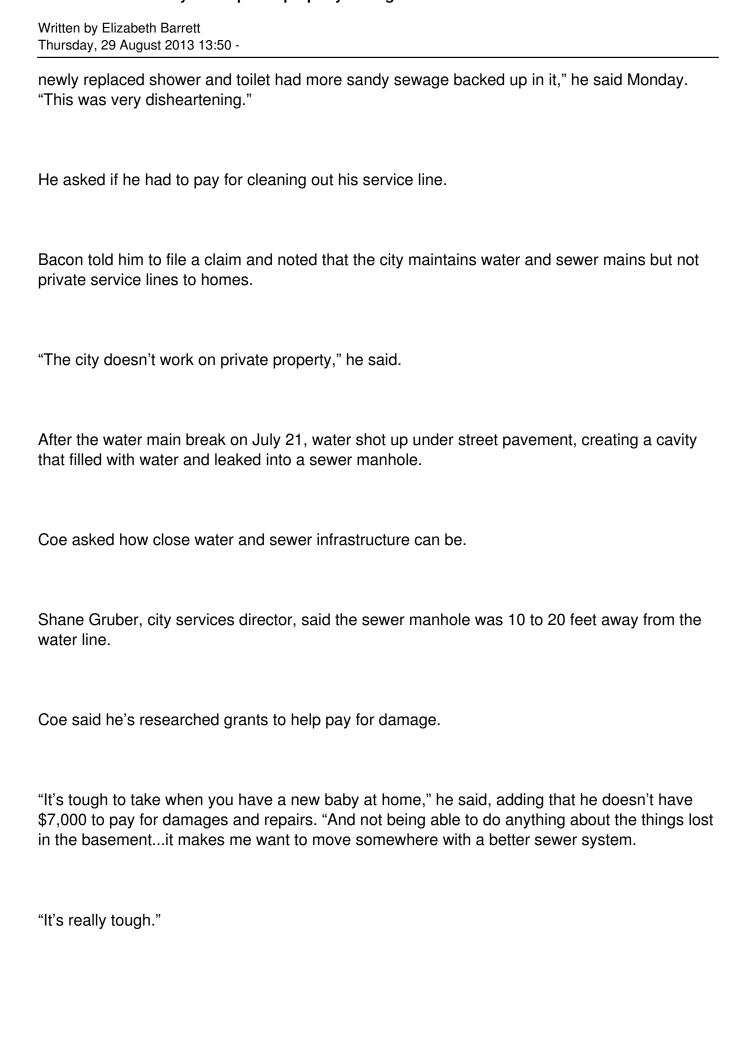
Residents affected by water line break advised to get legal counse
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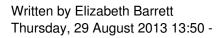
"See you in court."
Those were the parting words of Jim Bebensee to the Gothenburg City Council after members didn't act on a request from Bebensee and homeowner Travis Coe for monetary help.
The basements of Bebensee and Travis Coe and their families, and several other homes on Lake Avenue, flooded when a city water line broke and mixed with sewage on July 21.
Several property owners submitted claims to the city's insurance company and received letters stating that the damage would not be covered.
At the council's Aug. 20 meeting, Bebensee asked questions about the number and location of water line breaks, the age of pipes, why homeowners were not notified in a timely manner, city evacuation plans and more.
City attorney Mike Bacon said he and the council couldn't respond to some of the questions because the incident is under investigation by the city's insurance company.
"We have no explanation of what caused the break," Bacon said. "It's an unfortunate incident."
Bacon also said shutting down a pressure-filled water main and locating leaks is not easy.
Bebensee noted that sewage leaked into basements three weeks later when mud, from the first

incident, was vacuumed from a sewer line along Lake Avenue, from 20th to 11th streets.



"My wife, our newborn and I returned from Lincoln after her grandmother's passing to find our





Mayor Joyce Hudson said the city's hands are tied. Council president Jeff Kennedy said the council understands and is sorry.

Kennedy said he also appreciated the politeness shown by the Bebensee and Coe when they addressed the council.

On an unrelated matter, but one dealing with an earlier lawsuit brought by homeowners whose basements were damaged by water and sewage in 2010, the council entered into closed session for six minutes.

They took no action upon reconvening.

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