



# City of Saint Paul

15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

## Minutes - Final Legislative Hearings

*Marcia Moermond, Legislative Hearing Officer*  
*Mai Vang, Hearing Coordinator*  
*Jean Birkholz, Hearing Secretary*  
*legislativehearings@ci.stpaul.mn.us*  
*651-266-8585*

---

Thursday, May 15, 2014

9:00 AM

Room 330 City Hall & Court House

---

### 10:00 a.m. Hearings

#### Orders To Vacate, Condemnations and Revocations

- 1 [RLH VO 14-16](#) Appeal of Jocelyn Ramirez-Romero to a Notice of Condemnation Unfit for Human Habitation Order to Vacate at 966 MARYLAND AVENUE EAST.

**Sponsors:** Bostrom

*5/16/14: Per Legislative Hearing Officer, the time for vacate was changed from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.*

*5/15/14: Grant until May 16, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. for Appellant and her brother to vacate the property.*

*RE: 966 Maryland Avenue East (Single Family)*

*Jocelyn Ramirez-Romero appeared.*  
*Anne McShane appeared.*

*Ms. Moermond:*

*- will make a recommendation today for the Jun 4, 2014 City Council Public Hearing*  
*- at the May 13, 2014 LH we were looking for:*

- 1) ways to address the building's repairs*
- 2) get Fire inspector out there to make sure the smoke detectors and CO detectors were in place*
- 3) to get House Calls' dumpster out there*

*Ms. Ramirez-Romero:*

*- the dumpster can't be delivered until her car is moved; the car doesn't turn on so we'll need to push it right after this hearing*  
*- she has a 1 pm appointment with her school social worker today*

*Ms. Moermond:*

*- she wants to talk about the code violations and the problems with the housing*  
*- at 10:45 today, someone is coming from the city's Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Program, who can give some solid housing advice*  
*- will put Ms. Ramirez-Romero in a conference room with a speaker phone together with Laura and Anne to talk about the mortgage situation with her mom via cell phone (Laura will also interpret)*

- Jocelyn's mom purchase the property in 1999 for \$87,000; today, the property is worth \$97,700 according to the county but the county doesn't know the condition of the property; in this case, that will make the property's worth lower
- Laura can walk Jocelyn and her mom through the information
- at 11:15, Sade from House Calls will come; want her to talk to Jocelyn about filling out the forms for a Section 8 Certificate and Food Stamps

Ms. McShane:

- Jocelyn is also waiting for paperwork that she needs in order to fill out those applications like her brother's birth certificate; born at Regions Hospital
- there is still many years wait for Section 8 housing

Ms. Moermond:

- based on her brother's situation, she talked to the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Officer to find out about police interaction with your house
- wants to get a staff report about the conditions of the house
- wants Jocelyn to have everything she needs right now and to get her into some place safe and secure; these are uniquely tough circumstances
- the city will be putting a team together to help get you through this

Inspector James Thomas:

- did another initial inspection and managed to get partially into the basement but he needed to get in further
- there is an enormous amount of clothing piled up all over
- contacted St. Paul Regional Water Services and 3 weeks ago an Order was put in for a volunteer disconnect of water services

Ms. Moermond:

- explained that there was a break in a water line; so, they called to get the water service cut; there is an outstanding balance of about \$2,000

Mr. Thomas:

- believes that there's a water pipe burst in the basement but he could not find it for all the clothes, which make it more dangerous; you can see where there was water built up on the east side of the house where the dryer is located - that's a serious health hazard
- there is also bags of garbage by the furnace; he could not get back to the furnace completely, so, he could not make an assessment of the furnace
- the clothes dryer should not be used; the dryer duct is plastic and is coming away from the wall
- he would like to be able to see the electrical panel but he could not get to it yesterday
- the house is not livable; he believes that it's a danger right now for someone to be living there, sleeping there
- he could not find a CO detector in the house
- he found 1 smoke detector operable - covering the bedrooms upstairs; he brought 2 smoke detectors with him; there are no hard wired detectors in the house
- upstairs, there is 1 room on the NE side for sleeping purposes
- another room upstairs is filled with clothing and baby toys
- another room upstairs is just filled with storage
- there's another room that he could not get to; it's padlocked and doubled dead bolted; he wanted to look in that room because the kitchen ceiling is going to fall any day
- the upstairs toilet is way more than a loose toilet; the bathroom floor is rotting out around the base of the toilet - it's way too dangerous
- dirty dishes have been piled up for quite a while

- to be without water for a week is not good
- took photos
- there is no light in the basement except for a drop light strung from one side to the other but he couldn't get it to work
- he would make time if he could get down in the basement just to make sure that there's not some clothes/trash right underneath the burner of the furnace; it's just not safe
- main level of the house: that's in real trouble because the upstairs on the NE corner by the TV appears to be coming forward to Maryland; it's settling and moving the wrong way; it's hard to tell how much deflection there is because he can't get into that room
- from the outside, the block foundation is cracking; needs to get down into the basement

Ms. Ramirez-Romero:

- her brother, Joseph, is going to school; hangs out with his friends; has a broken hand

Ms. Moermond:

- she spoke with Officer Bob Jerue, who read the record of another officer who went out to your house
- basically, some vehicles were towed off the property
- another time, someone called when her brother broke his hand; an officer and a paramedic came; when they came, evidently, they found narcotics and some water pipes (bongs); and Joseph's girlfriend was there and he told the police that she was living there; the address that the police found for her is in West St. Paul; the girlfriend told the officer that Joseph plays basketball all day long
- understands that maybe Joseph is interested in gangs
- she believes that Joseph needs help, which will influence his ability to get more help from other places; he needs to be stone-cold sober to handle all of this

Ms. Ramirez-Romero:

- Joseph doesn't play basketball now with his broken hand; he watches, now; but he used to play basketball at school;
- he does go to school; he plays at school
- he also works at McDonald's but not right now because of his hand
- her brother has never been interested in gangs
- he did get in trouble a couple of weeks ago but it wasn't him who had it; it was from the other kids who were with him; they found weed in the car and his name was attached to it; got a letter from the county saying it was a petty misdemeanor; he went to treatment and has calmed down somewhat
- her friend was driving that car when it happened; she got a ticket for having weed in her car and driving the car with weed in the car; they told her that they didn't even smoke it; they were just parked at the time that the officer approached the car and they smelled the pot

Mr. Thomas:

- he said that there was a lot of liquor in the house and no one over 21
- he thought he smelled alcohol on Jocelyn

Ms. Ramirez-Romero:

- the liquor is her mom's; she had a little bar where she made margarita's
- she doesn't drink herself; she found a bottle upstairs in her mom's drawer and she put it into the kitchen
- she was not drinking; she had fallen asleep because she was very tired; she had just gotten off work; she doesn't drink; she has too much to think about and to do;

why would she bring that on herself, too?

*Ms. Moermond:*

- there's a lot of different things happening with Jocelyn and her brother; she is not coming down on them but all this has an influence on where they can get housing and how other things move along; she wants Jocelyn to be aware of that and get every single liquor bottle out of the house
- asked what was in the locked room
- asked about her biological dad
- asked about her future plans; believes that Jocelyn is capable of getting good grades and should be seriously looking at going to college or some type of school, which could change her life dramatically

*Ms. Ramirez-Romero:*

- the locked room is her cousin's room; he used to live there; he lived in the house for 10 years; he moved out about a month ago because of the water; he still has some stuff there; he was helping them pay the mortgage; he is 25 or 26 years old
- her dad lives in California; he calls once in a while; he doesn't help them much because he doesn't have much to offer them
- she plans to stay here, at least until her brother graduates high school; his grades are pretty good
- she wants to go to college but she has dyslexia and she can't get accepted to college because she is not up to college level reading; she did apply to Saint Paul College but was not accepted for lack of reading skills; so, she will work until her brother graduates

*Ms. Moermond:*

- explained that there are reading programs that can help prepare her for college; they are specifically designed for kids finishing school, who aren't ready to go to college because of reading or basic math
- the bottom line is that the house isn't safe and she will need to get Jocelyn and her brother out of it today or tomorrow at the latest
- knowing what she's knows now, she can't allow them to continue to live there; she is sorry
- she doesn't want them to land in the homeless shelter system
- there is no family or other resources that can help out
- Ann told Jocelyn about the Face to Face Program but so far no contact has been made; call ASAP
- a city crew needs to get into the basement to clean it out and put the material into the dumpster - to make it safe
- need to move the car (she is trying to sell her car but has had too much to do); the title is in her mom's name
- if the car is broken and is taking up space for where the dumpster needs to be; it can be taken off the property either by the city or someone from a towing company

*Ms. Ramirez-Romero:*

- she can move the car so that the dumpster can go there; her neighbor may be able to help her move it to a parking space
- the car is worth about \$700; a college student is coming today from North Dakota to get it

*Mr. Thomas:*

- that parking space next to the garage is dirt, gravel; and if she puts it there, the city will tow it because it's not paved; it's not a parking space - you can't park in the yard

*Ms. Moermond:*

- will talk to the city workers who do these clean-up situations to come out tomorrow or the next day, at the very latest

*Ms. Ramierz-Romero:*

- she has the Prom Saturday; this has been a very busy week; she is taking her brother to the Prom - it was her mom's idea

*Fire Inspector A. J. Neis:*

- re: trying to find emergency housing: Mr. Thomas made some statements about the possibility of more people living in the home; perhaps, some younger children; that needs to be addressed if that's the case

*Ms. Ramirez-Romero:*

- her sisters used to live there and all their clothes and toys are still there; her stepdad just grabbed some things and put them in a bag and walked out with her sisters; she has been looking through the clothes and toys and bringing them over to them little by little; she is trying not to give too much because their family is also dirty and they have a lot of kids - a lot of people in their house  
- there are no other kids living at her house  
- they have been eating at other people's homes  
- they have beds and clothes to move  
- just have a little money between the two of them for rent

*Ms. Moermond:*

- would like to see them get into an apartment that is theirs and is safe; it may take a while  
- in the meantime, they will be looking for a temporary place  
- we will set it up so that Jocelyn and Joseph get the things they need out of the house now and set up future appointments so that they have access to their things; will need to have someone go with  
- there is a concern about other kids, etc., being there (Joseph's girlfriend)  
- sometimes in these types of situations, the city boards up the main floor so that no one can get into it  
- appointments would be made with an inspector to enter the house for Jocelyn and her brother

*Ms. Ramirez-Romero:*

- told the girlfriend that she is not allowed at the house anymore

RECESS was taken at 10:51 a.m. to allow Jocelyn to speak with her mom; a conference room was set up with a speaker phone and an interpreter.

*Ms. Ramirez-Romero had an appointment with her social worker at 1 p.m.*

*The hearing resumed at 2:30 p.m.*

*Ms. Moermond:*

- asked about the meeting with her social worker

*Ms. Ramirez-Romero:*

- the social worker told her to call some shelters and that it would take a week for them to call me back  
- she took our names and numbers  
- she guesses that they will need to go to shelters for a few days (?)  
- both the counselor and SMRLS told her that

*Ms. Moermond:*

- will take another RECESS to make some calls about emergency housing
- will reconvene around 3 pm
- has a ride for Jocelyn later today to go to her job at Marstan

*RECONVENED at 2:55 pm*

*Ms. Moermond:*

- she called Ms. Kay Witgenstein, who said that she would make some calls; she knows someone who might be able to pay for a hotel for a week or so; won't know for sure until tomorrow
- she will write up a summary of this situation for Ms. Witgenstein
- the hotel will be for just a limited time
- she will keep working on finding a place for them
- at 2 pm tomorrow, Fri, May 16, you will need to be out of your house
- the car needs to be moved
- figure out what to do with the dog

*Ms. Ramirez-Romero:*

- she works tonight and tomorrow night
- the food stamp application is filled out
- her school social worker gave her names of shelters and a bus card

**Referred to the City Council due back on 6/4/2014**