



# 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*  
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*651-266-8585*

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Tuesday, November 19, 2024

9:00 AM

Room 330 City Hall & Court House/Remote

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### 9:00 a.m. Hearings

#### Special Tax Assessments

- 1     **RLH TA 24-423**     Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1528 HURON STREET. (File No. J2504T, Assessment No. 258507)

Sponsors:     Kim

*Reduce assessment from \$365.25 to \$162.*

*Zachary Crosby, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: June 17, 2024 a tall grass and weeds order was sent. Compliance date of June 21. Work checked June 25. Crew did the work July 1 for a total assessment of \$365.25.*

*Crosby: when it happened I was upstairs in a meeting, when the crew came to cut my wildflowers down. I came downstairs, asked them what they were doing. They told me. As soon as I left I called the City inspector who came out and looked at it and said he didn't know why the order came through, it shouldn't have. The main point was I'm not just neglecting the lawn, I'm trying to grow wildflowers and form a little ecosystem where pollinators and small critters can thrive because we're just paving the whole country. I have a kid and I strongly believe in doing what we can to help the environment. You can see from the photos you sent, there are tons of tall flowers and that's the part of the lawn I have been growing the longest; for years now. There were definitely some shorter parts where I did more recent plantings. I regularly hand weeded the tall grass. The work order was to raze everything which is crazy. I was glad I was home when they did it. The school across the street looks similar to my lawn and the City isn't cutting down their wildflowers. It made no sense to me. I don't have a trashy house and I'm not neglecting my property. I feel very strongly about this.*

*Moermond: I'm not opposed to native plantings. When I look at the photos I do see a lot of grass and sometimes what people do is stop mowing their turf lawns and let weeds prosper having it be a weed bed rather than a managed landscape as defined under the law. I want to get a copy of that to you so you have that information. I think it is in that gray area where there was a misunderstanding. Ms. Martin, does the inspector have any notes?*

*Martin: no notes in there.*

*Moermond: so, your main conversation was the contractor?*

*Crosby: I don't know why. A City inspector came immediately after the crew left. I asked why they are doing that. They said they weren't sure; they shouldn't be doing it for a lawn like this one. It was a different inspector, he said he didn't write the order.*

*Moermond: the guy who wrote it is Otis Warner, so I'm wondering if the guy who follows up may be the guy double checking the contractor work. That was after the fact, so we can't un-ring the bell on how it was defined before the action was taken. That's the rub. Contact beforehand we could have dealt with figuring out how we can make this possibly square. I'm kind of stuck with you not having that conversation before the contractors arrived.*

*Crosby: a few years ago, I was told by a City inspector you can grow things as tall as you want. The height maximum was just applied to grass.*

*Moermond: and you still got an order telling you it was a nuisance condition.*

*Crosby: I'm appealing because it was not a nuisance conversation.*

*Moermond: you didn't appeal it when you got the order to take care of business. The order was issued June 17 and the work didn't happen until July 1. That's a long time to let the City know you don't think it meets the definition of tall grass and weeds.*

*Crosby: when I got the order I went out and did a bunch of extra weeding. Based on what I was told before it should have been in compliance. In fact, it was in compliance.*

*Moermond: I don't know if I agree. When I see so much grass in there it is hard to distinguish wildflowers versus weeds growing from a turf lawn. There is a statutory definition.*

*Crosby: would you like to come to my house and I can show you?*

*Moermond: it seems late in the year to do that. It isn't the point now. You haven't had any violations ever before, so I'm considering that. I appreciate you maintaining your property. I would like to ask you to look at the state law about managed natural landscapes and make sure you meet that definition. You may want to consult with a master gardener to make sure you meet that definition and not turf lawn. I'll take some consideration here of that and when I looked at the charges I think the bill was incorrect in that the hourly charge was incorrect. It should be \$160, so out of the gates the cost would go down to \$324. On top of that we can decrease this again and get it down to \$162. Half of what the charge would be is what I can recommend to the Council. Moving forward work on that. The other things you can do is put up a sign indicating it is Native Plantings or pollinator friendly, that kind of things. That often leads to inspiration of positive questions versus complaints. I know it isn't everything you are looking for, but you're welcome to testify further at Council if you wish.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 1/29/2025**

**2 RLH TA 24-470** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1367 BREDA AVENUE. (File No. J2505R, Assessment No. 258508)

**Sponsors:** Yang

*Continue CPH to June 11, 2025 and if no same or similar violations, reduce assessment from \$345 to \$100.*

*Catherine Vranyes, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: a Summary Abatement Order was issued July 3 to remove a couch off the boulevard. Same notice was sent on July 4 due to system error. We rechecked July 12, the work wasn't done until July 26. Total assessment of \$345.*

*Vranyes: my appeal is based on my circumstances. I didn't have a method of removing it. I am a single mom going through a lot. The person I had that was going to help me wasn't able to. I didn't know how to deal with it, quite honestly. Had other things going on related to moving my mom to a nursing home and I just didn't know what to do. My plan was to have someone help me and I just got overwhelmed and didn't know my next step. That's basically it. I was thankful in some way it was going to get done, and then when I saw the amount of money I was like "oh my god, that's a lot." It would be helpful I guess if when things are sent a resource of who to call or how much it is.*

*Moermond: did you get the packet of information from Mai Vang that included a copy of the order itself and the follow up photos?*

*Vranyes: I did, yes.*

*Moermond: in that order it gives you the name of the inspector and the number and describes how to appeal. It does tell you the minimum charge. They are charging you \$181, not sure how that happened accounting-wise. Those are a bit less than what was in the notice. I'm hearing you say you didn't really have the emotional bandwidth to deal with this and the other things at the same time and you're already strapped with raising kids on your own.*

*Vranyes: yes, I practically didn't have anyone to help me. I am divorced and with no resources there. I had many other pressing things at the same time that were more important.*

*Moermond: I have a lot of sympathy for your position and at the same time the City did give you notice and told you who to call with questions and ability to appeal. It is hard for me to look backwards and integrate what personal things were going on. That could have been a conversation with the inspector. Also, your garbage hauler would have picked it up as part of your regular bill as you get 2 or 3 bulky items picked up as part of your regular bill; no extra charges. The notice doesn't tell you that. It is cold comfort right now. Taking that into consideration, your good history and the garbage hauler would be ready to take it, I am willing to get this reduced if we don't have any future issues.*

*Vranyes: I've been here 24 years and never been in this situation. It is all new to me.*

*Moermond: I see that. I don't think you'll have difficulty with this. Your Council Public Hearing is February 12. I'm going to ask them to continue your case to June 11, 2025 and if by then you haven't had anything else happen, I'll recommend this is reduced to \$100. That won't be invoiced until June of next year, it would eventually go on your 2026 property taxes. If you want to look for a different outcome you most certainly can, how to do that is in the notification for today's hearing.*

*Vranyes: it is just there was too much to manage at the time, I appreciate the consideration. It won't happen again.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 2/12/2025**

- 3 [RLH TA 24-472](#) Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1055 FOURTH STREET EAST. (File No. J2505R, Assessment No. 258508)

**Sponsors:** Johnson

*Layover to LH December 3, 2024 at 9 am (no contact info for PO).*

*No one appeared*

*Moermond: we don't have a number for the owner of 1055 East 4th street. We'll lay this over to December 3.*

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 12/3/2024**

- 4 **RLH TA 24-446** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 923 WOODBRIDGE STREET. (File No. J2505R, Assessment No. 258508)

**Sponsors:** Bowie

*Delete the assessment.*

*No one appeared*

*Moermond: the situation was the order was written for the tires and didn't include the table that was removed. That table didn't exist at the time the orders were written, was a new violation. Should have probably had a new Summary Abatement Order. We'll recommend this is deleted as it appears the tires were abated by the owner and that a table showed up in the same location, but it was after the original orders were sent. We cleaned up something new, but they addressed what they were aware of from our written notice. It is only fair to delete.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 2/12/2025**

## Staff Reports

### 10:00 a.m. Hearings

- 5 [SR 24-199](#) Review Request of Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 233 MARYLAND AVENUE WEST adopted by Council on September 18, 2024 under File RLH AR 24-64. (File No. VB2411, Assessment No. 228817)

**Sponsors:** Kim

*Delete the assessment.*

*Moermond: 233 Maryland, we have a cluster of a situation on this. A 90-day waiver was put into place originally by Department of Safety & Inspections staff. Building Inspector Clint Zane asked that waiver to be put into place, which is out of his authority as a Building Inspector. But, it is an official representation of the City of St.*

*Paul when he makes that kind of statement. Subsequently another waiver was put into place by Vicki Sheffer also acted outside the authority as City staff. As she represented the City, however, we need to honor the word of staff even if they are incorrect because this is what the owner understood the case to be. I will bring this to the attention of Mr. Hoban and Ms. Weise and will recommend this is deleted by Council.*

**Received and Filed**

### Special Tax Assessments

**6 RLH TA 24-456** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1568 CHAMBER STREET. (File No. J2506R, Assessment No. 258509)

**Sponsors:** Yang

*Delete the assessment.*

*Nicole Kaplan, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: a Summary Abatement Order was issued July 23, 2024 to owner and occupant to remove and dispose of some buckets, furniture, trash can, pool and all other debris from rear of property. Compliance July 30. Rechecked July 31, all same items present. Work was done for a total assessment of \$345. There are photos attached. There is a history at this property.*

*Kaplan: I am hoping to reduce the fine or fee because this has been a dumping trash a lot. When I've called about it before I haven't got anything back from anyone. I didn't want to go through trash that could have needles or other harmful things in it.*

*Moermond: I see dumped furniture and buckets.*

*Kaplan: yes, there was a dresser nightstand type thing.*

*Moermond: the thing is that you are responsible for your property even though someone may have dumped it there. It can't be there. I personally look at the plastic bucket and think anything harmful would be visible. All the same, it would be your responsibility to sort out. You could use tools to lift the items, which is what City staff would do. Or have the garbage hauler pick them up. When you got the order, I didn't hear from staff there as any communication to the City about the situation.*

*Kaplan: I had called and left a message with an individual. I don't think we connected.*

*Moermond: when was that? Before the deadline?*

*Kaplan: yes, it was before. I called after I got the notice.*

*Martin: there are no notes in the file. There are 7 or 8 previous orders to the property as well.*

*Kaplan: some of the orders were related to the native plants I was growing. They've been trimmed back.*

*Moermond: sure, I'm assuming it isn't native plants growing through the concrete. I'm*

*struggling with this. We've got these cases in the past where orders needed to be issued for property maintenance whether it was tall grass and weeds or overhanging vegetation, and garbage. What I'm going to say, in each of those cases you took care of business and the City didn't need to take action to clean it up, which is positive. That happened the week before. I'm guessing they went to recheck the overhanging vegetation and wrote orders on the dumping at that time. I'm struggling to find a reason why I could decrease or delete this. I'm stuck looking at whether you got proper legal notice. Whether the City did the work. I need to focus on those things.*

*Kaplan: looking at my records I called on July 30th. 651-266-9066.*

*Moermond: alright. What I'd like to do is have Ms. Martin check with the inspector and see if he remembers anything. I'm trusting you made this communication, and it was before the deadline. I just don't know what happened with that. We'll look into that and see what we learn and see if it impacts any recommendation about the assessment. We'll do that follow up December 3.*

*[follow up after hearing]*

*Moermond: Ms. Martin, you reviewed this file more deeply, what would you like to add?*

*Martin: due to inspector error we'd recommend deleting those fees. In May there was an order for these items. Not sure what happened to that, but then the same photo shows up in the July order and the inspector is no longer working for the Department of Safety & Inspections.*

*Moermond: in May there was an order for these items to be removed. Not sure what happened to that. Then the same photo of the items shows up in the July orders and the inspector is no longer working with the Department, so I'll recommend deletion.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 2/12/2025**

- 7 RLH TA 24-445** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1219 FIFTH STREET EAST. (File No. J2506R, Assessment No. 259509)

**Sponsors:** Johnson

*Delete the assessment.*

*No one appeared*

*Moermond: we have a photo and a note that it was orders to remove two chairs from the rear of the property. A couch from the boulevard is what was removed. It seems to me that if that existed when the inspector went out it would have been included. I'll recommend deletion because they didn't get notice of the couch violation.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025**

- 8 RLH TA 24-426** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1099 GERANIUM AVENUE EAST. (File No. J2502R, Assessment No. 258501)

**Sponsors:** Yang

*Approve the assessment.*

*Alexis Dickey, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: a Summary Abatement Order was issued on May 6 to dispose and remove of toilet and other debris in rear of property. Compliance date of May 13th. Rechecked on the 13th and items were still there. Work was done May 15 for a total assessment of \$345. There is a history here, another Summary Abatement Order was issued for garbage and sent to work order.*

*Dickey: we bought the house and moved back to Minnesota from North Carolina. We previously lived in Minneapolis, which is very different in terms of snow patrol and trash. We moved in mid-October 2023. Part of the buying house was it was an estate property and part of the deal was we clean out the house. It was a sad situation where an older lady was a hoarder. Stuff everywhere. There was process of cleaning it out, paying for dumpsters. That happened. The one in October I'm sure was related to that. May rolls around and we get this Summary Abatement Order saying they'd taken away stuff. That toilet was not ours. People repeatedly put things in the alley. We weren't aware we were supposed to roam the alley to put things in our trash. Now we understand, and we go out weekly and put things in the trash. That was taken, it wasn't our stuff. I take full ownership of the one in October. Now to get this outrageous bill for a first occurrence and not really understanding, which we now do. We're just a small family of 4 trying to make a living. We now know to check the alley. We text our neighbors about stuff in the back now, we're trying to keep it as clean as we can. There's just a lot of dumping, we love our neighbors but we can't control the stuff routinely put back there. We've cleaned up the property remarkably.*

*Moermond: was there a bathroom remodel?*

*Dickey: no, no toilet or sinks.*

*Moermond: you said you put it from the alley by your garage?*

*Dickey: no, we routinely check on that now. We'll put stuff in our can or my husband takes it to the dumpster at work.*

*Moermond: was it dumped by the garage? Or moved there?*

*Dickey: I don't even know; we weren't going out there routinely like we are now. I can't say for sure. I know once we got the documentation and I've started paying attention.*

*Moermond: two things going on, you would have got the order to clean this up that was mailed May 6. The work was done 9 days later. It sounds like you have some dumping you experience in the alley and at the garage. I'm sorry for that. I too am an east-sider, but I don't experience dumping but I also don't have an alley. The City did give notice and do the work. I don't have a reason in the information you've shared that would past muster for a reason to decrease or delete.*

*Dickey: it should be, that's 9 days when all this other stuff was going on. I don't know if you have kids, but do you check your mail every day with kids? If anything I'd like a one-time gracious decrease. We weren't even aware. \$400 is a lot for a family.*

*Moermond: I have you closing September 29, 2023. What I notice when I look at your previous order for the garbage and that assessment, that order was addressed to the previous owner, not to you. Therefore, you didn't have proper notice. I'm going to get*

that assessment deleted so that one will go away. This one I am going to recommend approval of because there was proper notice. I understand your circumstance. You're coming out even on this but it is for different reasons. This goes to Council January 15. They may look at it differently than I do. I'll recommend approval on this for the plumbing fixtures; but then go back in time and delete that assessment. That's for the same amount, \$345.

Dickey: I didn't know we had two.

Moermond: the work was done in October 2023.

**Referred to the City Council due back on 1/15/2025**

- 9 [RLH TA 24-454](#) Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 714 ROSE AVENUE EAST. (File No. J2505R, Assessment No. 258508)

**Sponsors:** Yang

Layover to LH December 3, 2024 at 10 am (PO unavailable for hearing).

Joan Chavez, owner, appeared via phone

Moermond: looks like we have two pending assessments you appealed for 714 East Rose.

Chavez: I was confused because I was under the impression my son in law took care of that.

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Chavez: I'm in a physical therapy appointment now.

Moermond: we'll continue this two weeks, to December 3, between 10 and 11:30 we'll give you a call.

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 12/3/2024**

- 10 [RLH TA 24-453](#) Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 714 ROSE AVENUE EAST. (File No. J2506R, Assessment No. 258509)

**Sponsors:** Yang

Layover to LH December 3, 2024 at 10 am (PO unavailable for hearing).

Joan Chavez, owner, appeared via phone

Moermond: looks like we have two pending assessments you appealed for 714 East Rose.

Chavez: I was confused because I was under the impression my son in law took care of that.

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Chavez: I'm in a physical therapy appointment now.

Moermond: we'll continue this two weeks, to December 3, between 10 and 11:30 we'll



*give you a call.*

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 12/3/2024**

### Special Tax Assessments-Rolls

- 11 RLH AR 24-106** Ratifying the assessment for Tall Grass and Weed Removal services during July 29 to 30, 2024. (File No. J2505T, Assessment No. 258510)
- Sponsors:** Jalali
- Referred to the City Council due back on 2/12/2025**
- 12 RLH AR 24-105** Ratifying the assessment for Rubbish and Garbage Clean Up services during June 28 to July 26, 2024. (File No. J2505R, Assessment No. 258508)
- Sponsors:** Jalali
- Referred to the City Council due back on 2/12/2025**
- 13 RLH AR 24-107** Ratifying the assessment for Rubbish and Garbage Clean Up services during July 24 to August 12, 2024. (File No. J2506R, Assessment No. 258509)
- Sponsors:** Jalali
- Referred to the City Council due back on 2/12/2025**

### 11:00 a.m. Hearings

#### Correction Orders

- 14 RLH CO 24-15** Appeal of Barbara Ritt to a Correction Notice at 914 CHARLOTTE STREET.
- Sponsors:** Jalali
- Grant the appeal. Parking existed prior to 2017 and has not been expanded.*
- Barbara Ritt, owner, appeared*
- [Moermond gives background of appeals process]*
- Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: a Correction Notice was issued October 10, 2024. This is a Certificate of Occupancy property. It was in regard to the parking area, to immediately discontinue the addition of the gravel parking area on the north side of the garage. A site plan must be approved by the City for any parking area addition or modification. Any new parking area approved by the City would be required to be asphalt, concrete or pavers. October 17 was the deadline. The appeal was filed and there are photos attached.*
- Moermond: you have a double garage?*

*Ritt: yeah, a double garage. My house is at the end of the "T" alley. Pierce butler is my fence. That alley is gravel, maintained by the City.*

*Moermond: the City's aerial photos show the garage, and two cars parked, and then this area that we're talking about looks like in this photo it is gravel that need refreshing. What I'm hearing from Ms. Martin is that area was not approved as parking so it needs to go through plan review for them to sign off on, as well as it being gravel.*

*Moermond: is the issue more the type of surfacing, or the parking area?*

*Martin: just the parking area since the alley is Class 5.*

*Ritt: I bought this home in 2003, I've grown up in the Midway, 905 Fry. I purchased this as a rental property. Been a landlord there for 21 years. When I bought it, I know ignorance of the law is not an excuse, but the photos in my abstract show there is parking. It also says the driveway is gravel. Which is weird because it's the alley. When I spoke to Mr. Kedrowski initially, he told me to talk to zoning. I talked to Frances Birch there and sent her the drawing you had, and then I got back with her, but I never heard back. All I got back from her was saying I have to go back to the Inspector guy. I have called Richard October 14, spoke to him. October 16 twice. October 24 again called. Called November 1 and November 3 twice and he's never returned my call. When I purchased the house I bought it from a young man who flipped it. An older lady lived there, there was no tenant. Then he bought it, flipped it, and had a tenant upstairs and I purchased from him in 2003. I've had numerous inspections, been cited for stuff, even the neighbors stuff. No one has ever mentioned anything to me about the parking or driveway. I did mention to Richard my Fire Inspector said the Class 5 was getting thin, you should refresh it. That was verbal, it wasn't written down. I threw more class 5 down then 7 months later I got this notice.*

*An email from Richard Kedrowski to Frances Birch said, "there has never been a defined gravel parking area in this location on or before 2017," which I disagree with. You can see it on the Google Earth photos that it has been there. The alley is gravel and the City does say "or material comparable to the adjacent street surfacing." If I just have to get a permit thing for this parking, I didn't know I even had to do that. I'm more than willing, but I've always had parking there for 21 years.*

*Martin: looking at the photo, there's nothing over there. It is class 5. I think as long as zoning would approve it, they could approve the expansion.*

*Moermond: this wasn't written as a violation of zoning. It was written as parking violation and property maintenance code. It is connected to a gravel alley, so that makes class 5 ok. You don't have to be consistent with the code. I'm going to agree and say it existed and is not an expansion and we don't have information -I think 2017---that's an arbitrary date?*

*Martin: Anything prior to 2017, if you could prove you had class 5, you wouldn't have to do asphalt and concrete and could refresh with class 5. Looking at the aerial from 2017 it looks like it is parking.*

*Moermond: I completely agree. He's referencing zoning code and using it as a guidepost. Don't expand the parking area.*

*Ritt: I'm 9 feet from the fence. I've never expanded it, it just like the drawing.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 12/4/2024**

**1:00 p.m. Hearings****Vacant Building Registrations**

- 15 [RLH VBR 24-69](#) Appeal of Patrick Cusick to a Vacant Building Registration Fee Warning Letter at 517 IOWA AVENUE EAST.

**Sponsors:** Kim

*Layover to LH November 26, 2024 at 1 pm (unable to reach PO).*

*Voicemail left at 1:43 pm: this is Marcia Moermond from St. Paul City Council calling Patrick Cusick about your appealed Vacant Building registration. We'll try you back in a little bit.*

*Voicemail left at 1:56 pm: Mr. Cusick, this is Marcia Moermond from St. Paul City Council trying to reach you again about your appealed Vacant Building registration for 517 Iowa Avenue East. We'll put you on the calendar next week again at 1 pm.*

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 11/26/2024**

- 16 [RLH VBR 24-70](#) Appeal of Richard A. Bowen to a Vacant Building Registration Fee Warning Letter at 767 UNIVERSITY AVENUE WEST.

**Sponsors:** Noecker

*Layover to LH December 17, 2024 at 1 pm for discussion of proposed deadlines by PO, based on full Fire C of O inspection (to occur no later than December 11).*

*Richard Alan Bowen, co-owner, appeared  
Andrew Dawkins, co-owner, appeared*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Brian Schmidt: July 24, 2024 Sebastian Migdal had his first inspection, no one was there to meet. Spoke on August 2 to Responsible Party who has been sick. Will follow up with Responsible Party the week of August 12.*

*September 3 left a Voicemail with property owner Rick. New appointment letter sent, then no one present October 1 after multiple attempts to access. Building appeared to be vacant, transferred to Vacant Building. He uncertified it since it appeared to be vacant and then exterior sanitation and walls. Basically, a hard time getting in to do the full Certificate of Occupancy inspection.*

*Staff report by Supervisor Matt Dornfeld: we opened a Category 2 Vacant Building on October 2, 2024 per that referral from Fire Inspection. At the time of inspection, Inspector Hesse noted it appeared vacant and was secured and maintained. He noted to see Fire Inspector list for photo violations.*

*Moermond: this was opened as a Category 2 Vacant Building based on revocation or conditions observed?*

*Dornfeld: both. A revocation with multiple code violations and Mr. Hesse has some photos of severe peeling paint, a missing second story window, some siding issues. That's why he went with Category 2.*

*Bowen: I'd been in communication with Sebastian. The original date to inspect it had just been burglarized, the place was trashed.*

*Moermond: when was this?*

*Bowen: several weeks before I received the letter saying it was vacant. He said well, he wouldn't come due to the burglary and the place being trashed and stole a bunch of things. He was going to call me and set up another date. I never did get another call. All this him saying it looked vacant, because we've communicated for several years for inspections. I really wish he was here. I can't believe he said it appeared vacant. We've had a good relationship. I'm surprised to hear all of that.*

*Dawkins: I was out of town the end of September for 2 weeks. I still work there, I'm there 3 to 4 days a week. It was addressed to me being set for a date that had already passed. I assumed Rick got a letter and had taken care of it. Then I talked to him and he said no.*

*Bowen: we've officed there since the 1980's. I meet with clients there. It has never been vacant. I called Greg in the notice and the number. He said there was a meeting on a certain date and you weren't there, so we deemed it vacant. I never got notice of this meeting on a date and time.*

*Dawkins: I think when the letter was addressed to Andrew Dawkins and didn't have Rick Bowen's name on it, I just assumed he got a separate letter too. The date had already passed so I thought he took care of it.*

*Bowen: usually anything from the City or County its addressed to both of us. If my name is on it I open it up. I got no notice to be somewhere at a particular time or place for an inspection. I didn't get notice. I told Greg [Weiner] that and he told me to appeal. Now here we are.*

*Moermond: I'm curious about the letters you send out, and to whom they were addressed. Particularly who the Certificate of Occupancy Responsible Party is as opposed to the owner on Ramsey County tax records. Are they the same? Different?*

*Schmidt: to the address at 767 University c/o Andrew Dawkins back to 2017.*

*Shaff: and the owner of record with Ramsey County.*

*Moermond: I also see the Vacant Building letter going to Mr. Bowen and one jointly to Mr. Bowen and Mr. Dawkins. I mention that because Mr. Dornfeld, you pull from Ramsey County records, right? Not Fire Certificate of Occupancy?*

*Dornfeld: that is correct, our database does it.*

*Moermond: for some reason the City downloaded just your information, which is a programming quirk. The Vacant Building letters go straight to Ramsey County because it could result in an assessment on your taxes so the City needs to legally inform the tax owner. So, notice is squared away. If you don't want to be the Fire Certificate of Occupancy Responsible Party, we need to change that.*

*Dawkins: why does he call you all the time?*

*Bowen: yes, all the time.*

*Moermond: formally that's what is on the record. We can get you that form. Let's talk*

*a bit about the interior. You're fixing things up. I'd like to get an inspector inside, just because its trashed doesn't mean it can't be occupied. We can get orders issued, my main goal is to have a concrete list of things to be done and figure out a plan and deadlines to get you out of the Vacant Building program.*

*Bowen: the understanding Sebastian and I had; we've talked many times. He knows we have it for sale at this time due to rising taxes and we're the only ones using it now. Used to be 5 lawyers. He knew we had it for sale and he even delayed coming to inspect. We've always been there for inspections. He calls me and tells me.*

*Moermond: and I need to hit reset on this. Officially the letters went to Mr. Dawkins setting the appointments. He was out of town for that time. Some miscommunication. You're selling the building, does that mean you don't want to fix it now because you have it listed for sale?*

*Bowen: Sebastian and I talked about it. IF there were things that had to be done, we would do them.*

*Moermond: and I need you to set aside your conversations with Mr. Migdal. We're here now, we're moving forward. What does that look like, where do you want to go with it?*

*Bowen: yeah, I haven't opposed being inspected at all. Never have. But he was going to call me and work out a date.*

*Moermond: and I think the miscommunication was he did sent a letter to the Certificate of Occupancy Responsible Party and it wasn't you. That's the problem.*

*Shaff: there are a couple instances where Mr. Migdal did note that he left a Voicemail for the property owner Rick, and talked to him. Left a Voicemail at least.*

*Moermond: hitting reset. We get an inspector in, that gives the opportunity to create a list of deficiencies to be addressed. This is a commercial building; it is a house used for commercial purposes. Inspected as such. Let's get that inspection, we don't have deadlines by when things need to be done. We could definitely figure out what makes sense. We need to have orders or it needs to be in the Vacant Building program, and everyone prefers for it to have orders I think.*

*Dawkins: once it is inspected with orders, it is clear it isn't a Vacant Building anymore?*

*Moermond: that's where I'd like to go. Meet the deadlines we establish you are out of the Vacant Building program. But we need fresh orders to do that.*

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 12/17/2024**

**17 RLH VBR 24-71 Appeal of Carolyn Brown, Community Stabilization Project, to a Vacant Building Registration Notice at 622 WELLS STREET.**

**Sponsors:** Yang

*Waive VB fee to January 3, 2025. Grant to January 3, 2025 to have Fire C of O reinstated, or property will remain in VB program.*

*Carolyn Brown, property representative, appeared via phone*

*Moermond: looks like we have a recent revocation and order to vacate and a*

*brand-new Vacant Building registration. You know the appeal route well, which will also be in the follow up letter.*

*Staff report by Supervisor Leanna Shaff: Fire Certificate of Occupancy approval with corrections in February 2024. Typically, when we approve something in the winter with exterior items that are weather dependent we will give some time. That is what the fire inspector did, it was approved in February. We expected those items to be done by May or June. We made numerous trips throughout the summer. Come October 9 with no compliance we transferred and revoked the Fire Certificate of Occupancy. October the inspector emailed Ms. Brown on September 25, for signed document indicating the work was going to get done. Trying to work with the Responsible Party. They posted a placard and posted orders on the door for tenants. The do or die date was November 6. Sent out orders and no one was present. When inspector Chute called she stated she was out of town, but we'd already made the deadline. Sent it to Vacant Buildings.*

*Staff report by Supervisor Matt Dornfeld: November 7, 2024 Inspector Hesse opened a Category 2 Vacant Building per Fire referral. At the time of inspection he noted it appeared vacant and the exterior maintained.*

*Brown: I'm looking for clarification about the fence repaired. They did everything else and did the painting, so I'm not sure what part. Now I'm asking for an extension to try and figure out what needs to be repainted and get the Fire Certificate of Occupancy back.*

*Moermond: what happened this summer that it wasn't done?*

*Brown: in the beginning when it started it was on the left side. That was all repaired. The gate was repaired. They painted the garage. I don't know what they missed, but I did ask them to go back out to paint everything over again. I was under the impression it was all done. They got the yard cleaned up. Now I just notice it says something about the numbers on the garage.*

*Moermond: the orders are like those originally issue din February. More specificity for fence and garage and what remains. You want more time, what does that mean?*

*Brown: 30 days.*

*Moermond: paint won't stick, it's too cold. You could paint new boards inside, any replacement boards. I'm ok with going 30 days to get this taken care of. All of it should be done by January 3, 2025.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 12/4/2024**

## 1:30 p.m. Hearings

### Orders To Vacate - Fire Certificate of Occupancy

- 18 RLH VO 24-34** Appeal of Jaswant Teekasingh to a Revocation of Fire Certificate of Occupancy and Order to Vacate at 159 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE WEST.

**Sponsors:** Bowie

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Grant to January 3, 2025 to have permits finalized and Fire C of O reinstated.

Jaswant Teekasingh, owner, appeared

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor Brian Schmidt: I did the original Certificate of Occupancy inspection on this. Originally just some ceiling damage in the office. He did a full remodel during the inspection period, which created a few problems in there. He did appeal on the timeline once, and there was some confusion on that. According to the last Legislative Hearing the work was to be done by October 11. I went out on the 14th and it was progressing but wasn't completed and the permits hadn't been finalized. I called and didn't get a response from Mr. Teekasingh. He did get back to me on the 16th when he told me the work wasn't done and he thought he had until October 19 to get it completed. I told him the appeals process again and explained how once those dates are established I can't change them. Sounds like there was some email problems with him getting photos to the building inspector. As of this morning no electrical permit has been pulled for the unpermitted electrical work. I believe she was asked what scope of work needs to be covered, she just said she noticed some fixture changes and things moved. I notified Mr. Teekasingh about appealing before I left on vacation.

Moermond: we talked September 10 and you thought one month would do the job.

Teekasingh: I own some property in Florida and I had to go down after Helene, I got trapped down there and came back on the 14th. I was having someone help me do the mudding and taping and they didn't come while I was gone so I had to do it myself when I got back. The building inspector kept changing the goal posts as to what she wanted. Initially she wanted to see photos of the sheetrock being hung, then later said she wanted fire rated sheet rock. Returned and got that. Then she wanted to see the screw pattern. So, I sent photos of that. I didn't realize I needed a permit to change a fixture. I spoke to a general contractor he called and spoke to Marcia Holliday; nothing was moved over 4 feet we shouldn't need a permit. Brian was out there saw everything was back together. Now I just don't know a path forward. The inspector told me what she wanted. I did what she asked. I sent her more stuff. Then the goalposts keep getting changed. She hasn't been out the entire length of time. I copied Mr. Schmidt and she said she never got them. She hasn't communicated with me about what I need to do. I'm a small shop. Last week Friday my employee says his wife is in labor, so now I'm not doing any body work or mechanical. All I can do is breathalyzer. That's my only source of revenue. Now if you shut me down I have no revenue. I don't even know if I have an employee. The inspector didn't manage anything when I pulled a building permit. I never got responses to what I provided was sufficient. The last conversation I had with her was Friday when she said I needed an electrical permit.

Moermond: I thought I understood you to say she responded saying she needed fire rated.

Teekasingh: I hadn't installed it yet.

Moermond: and screw pattern could have been dealt with at the same time. For whatever reason, maybe she forgot, I simply don't know. I don't hear she's moving the goalpost she's asking for more detail.

Teekasingh: if she'd come out and done a physical inspection we could have gotten it done then, but she never did that.

*Moermond: I don't want to make her not going out a good or bad thing, the reason is that for a lot of people it is more convenient to send a photo when they can rather than scheduling a time to meet with an inspector. It is meant to be more flexible. In hindsight it may have been more convenient to have all eyes on at the same time.*

*Teekasingh: I'm just trying to figure out what I do now. I need to know what I need to do. My general contractor said what I did I didn't need a permit. HE's willing to do it, but that's additional cost. I have it painted and I'm ready to move back in to the office. What do I do?*

*Shaff: did you run any wire?*

*Teekasingh: it was there, I just moved it up.*

*Shaff: who did the work?*

*Teekasingh: I did.*

*Shaff: it is supposed to be done by a licensed contractor. You can change a light bulb or switch plate cover, according to the electrical code.*

*Teekasingh: I did not know that.*

*Moermond: and that should have been made clear.*

*Teekasingh: I do computer repairs. I'm certified to do electrical repairs on cars. The rules are the rules, but I do a lot of repairs.*

*Shaff: and the State doesn't look at it that way.*

*Moermond: the electrical was done after the hearing?*

*Teekasingh: the same time.*

*Schmidt: the same time, yes. A lot was there when I inspected and I didn't know how much was moved and how much was original on that portion of the electrical. I didn't amend my orders; it was just getting the building permit closed for the renovations being done.*

*Teekasingh: I only spoke to the building inspector. I only have a couple custom cupboards I made to finish. I wasn't expecting my employee to disappear on me. I'm by myself now.*

*Moermond: the previous set of orders under appeal didn't specify electrical work. It seems to me that this particular situation outside of the fact you were operating with a Council deadline would be given time. I'd like to give you a new timeline to wrap this up and to work with your contractor to get a permit pulled and finalized and get it taken care of. I'd like to recommend the City Council grant the appeal and allow the building to be occupied, however we're going to give you a new deadline for the other work.*

*Schmidt: I was in there a week and a half ago. I stopped by before I went on vacation to try and get this straightened out. The big thing was they were painting it then and Marcia is holding up the electrical permit and once that's done she'll close hers.*

*Teekasingh: contractor schedules are so busy, that's the big thing.*



*Moermond: I'll recommend the Council gives to January 3 to get these permits finalized so you are in compliance with the Fire Orders.*

*Teekasingh: that should be fine.*

*Schmidt: I just want the permits closed so I can close it out.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 12/4/2024**

## 2:00 p.m. Hearings

### Fire Certificates of Occupancy

- 19 RLH FCO  
24-104** Appeal of Brenda Benson to a Correction Notice-Reinspection Complaint at 1250 MINNEHAHA AVENUE EAST.

**Sponsors:** Johnson

*Deny the appeal as conditions existed at the time orders were written, noting the violations have now been corrected.*

*Moermond: we're just doing a follow up on last week's hearing. Inspector was going by to view the repairs.*

*Shaff: Inspector Thomas viewed both the foundation and retaining wall repairs and abated the orders and signed off.*

*Moermond: Council deny the appeal as the conditions existed at the time the orders were written, but note they are abated.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 12/4/2024**