



City of Saint Paul

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Minutes - Final

Legislative Hearings

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Tuesday, May 4, 2021

9:00 AM

Remote Hearing

22 RLH VO 21-15

Appeal of Jonathon Wayne to a Notice of Condemnation as Unfit for Human Habitation and Order to Vacate at 1026 REANEY AVENUE.

Sponsors: Prince

Deny the appeal of the condemnation and order to vacate. Property will be referred to the VB program.

Jonathan Wayne, occupant, appeared via phone

Wayne: I can't seem to find the owner. Last I heard he was going to his brother in law's. Since we live together I don't even have his phone number. I was so flustered I didn't think about it.

Staff report by Supervisor Paula Seeley: I was out there on May 3rd with the St. Paul Police Department and we did an inspection. I have been in the unit a couple years ago. It was severely dilapidated. Illegal bedrooms with no egress. No smoke detectors. No light and ventilation in the basement, and combustibles around furnace and water heater. 10 people in the unit at that time. Kitchen sink doesn't function. Exposed wires throughout kitchen. Fixtures dangling. Knob and tube wires exposed. Flooring is broken. It goes on and on. It is constant complaints. The garbage we've had three or four major cleanups in the last four months that the City has assessed and several excessive consumptions for broken windows. It just isn't being maintained and it is an endangerment to all the people living there. If there was a fire they would never get out. That's why I condemned it. I posted it on the 3rd and vacated on the 4th. Everyone was aware of it. The placard was on the front of the building. We went out to board it today and several people came out and we boarded and vacated. Then the appeal was filed.

Moermond: you've been out there a lot with a lot of code issues at this property. You said you asked to do an interior inspection?

Seeley: in February we went out a couple times and knocked and Curtis said absolutely not.

Moermond: yesterday the police were out there, were you doing code and called them or they were there and called Code?

Seeley: they called me.

Moermond: so they saw conditions that merited a code enforcement review and the owner allowed access. Mr. Wayne, why are you appealing?

Wayne: I do not disagree the house is in disarray. My girlfriend and I rent a room upstairs and the garage. We've been living there 10 years. He has let it go lately. He has too many people over. He isn't able to take care of it as much anymore with his health. He has COPD and is really sick. I agree with everything said. But she didn't mention that I spent the whole night cleaning and getting the garbage out of the house. If you ask her today, it was clean wasn't it?

Seeley: the yard was a lot cleaner.

Wayne: on the inside I got all the garbage out. I had a pickup and trailer full of garbage I cleaned up. As far as the kitchen, the exposed wiring is because they did demo in the kitchen to get remodeled and his brother in law is doing the work. Supposedly he got busy with whatever else and he never came back to finish. That's why that's that way. Curt was going today to talk to him and tell him to come and finish the kitchen. That's what the exposed wiring and ceiling and sink is about. It was getting demoed for remodeling. He has to get him out to finish or find someone else to do it. Curt gets a trust fund from his mother, she set things up for him in the house when she was dying of stomach cancer. He has to go through a bank to get money for the fixes. She only gave him so much to spend and anything to fix the house is okayed. He's been stuck with this contractor that was supposed to do a lot of things and he never did. I told him he needs to take him to court and sue him.

Moermond: I appreciate what you're saying, but there are more problems than garbage. I get the explanation for the wires. What are you looking for now? You mentioned in your appeal you have a lot of stuff in the property.

Wayne: if we can get a week to stay there to get our stuff out. We have 10 years' worth of stuff in there. They told us at 3 pm yesterday and I couldn't get a storage unit or anything. I did call yesterday to appeal. I want that on record. I tried to call and they told me it wasn't in the computer so there was nothing they could do. I'm sure there is record of me calling.

Moermond: were having a conversation now. Your goal is to get access to your stuff. I think that is doable. My concern is that we have a ton of code violations making the house unsafe and the owner is not present and is sick and staying elsewhere and not able to deal with this stuff. He is the responsible party. I'm also concerned the overoccupancy will recreate itself.

Wayne: on that issue, we got rid of anyone except for the four people who live there. We aren't going to let anyone back in. She saw people this am because they were grabbing their things. I talked to Paula, I thought she was going to help us out, she keeps flip flipping on us.

Seeley: you called me at 8 a.m. before I got out of there saying they were gone and then I got there and four new people were there.

Wayne: they were leaving though weren't they?

Seeley: after arguing yelling and screaming, yeah.

Wayne: we only had a chance to grab a few things with the police hanging over us. We grabbed some clothes. I don't even have a phone charger. Everything is locked up and now we have nothing and nowhere to go.

Moermond: you don't have a phone number for Curtis?

Wayne: not at the moment. The police said they had it and were going to give it to me. I'll track him down somehow.

Moermond: it really seems like that is critical to get in the house. He is the legal owner of the house. This is a property you can go into between 8 am and 8 pm. I have a number of 763-228-9369. He wrote it also as 9639. He wrote it both ways. We did have an appeal from him in 2019.

Wayne: he goes through phones a lot. We live with him so I don't have his number.

Moermond: Ms. Seeley, did you refer this to the vacant building program?

Seeley: I spoke to Mr. Magner about it, he said if they were appealing we'll talk about it after.

Moermond: I ask because when someone wants access between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. and need to unscrew the board--

Seeley: Inspector Hoffman will be taking over.

Moermond: so he could meet Mr. Wayne at the property to give him some time to get things out. You mostly need to get ahold of Curtis and organize around that. I'm sure Mr. Hoffman can work with you.

Wayne: we have a whole bedroom of things, and a storage closet with a lock on it and then the whole garage. It will probably take me at least a full day.

Moermond: of course. For the short term he can help you get what you need and you can work with Curtis for all day access. I'm also going to refer you to House Calls who may be able to help with temporary housing. Call Lauren Lighter and explain what's going on and she may be able to help.

Seeley: Ms. Moermond, I just found a number on my voicemail. 651-560-8565. That's probably his, I tried with no answer.

Wayne: he said he was going to come down and appeal but he never does what he says he's going to do.

Moermond: that's a concern of ours too. You can also call James Hoffman and leave him a message. Call him first thing in the morning.

Wayne: so no way to grab things for tonight?

Moermond: it is already 2:30, there's no way to get staff out. The property owner is unavailable. Call Ms. Lightner.

Referred to the City Council due back on 5/12/2021