



# 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, June 10, 2025

9:00 AM

Room 330 City Hall & Court House/Remote

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#### 9:00 a.m. Hearings

##### Remove/Repair Orders

- 1 [RLH RR 25-18](#) Ordering the razing and removal of the structures at 1510 LAUREL AVENUE within five (5) days after the July 16, 2025, City Council Public Hearing.

**Sponsors:** Bowie

*Layover to LH June 24, 2025 at 9 am for further discussion after PO review of options for property.*

*Joanne Backer, owner, appeared*

*Dan Fowlds realtor & former neighbor, appeared*

*Alexa Marsh, attorney o/b/o US Bank, appeared via phone*

*Voicemail left for Kibong Fongdungallah, attorney o/b/o US Bank left at 9:31 am: this is Marcia Moermond from St. Paul City Council calling Kibong Fongdungallah about 1510 Laurel. We'll get the background read into the record and try you again in a few minutes. Hopefully you'll be available then.*

*Moermond: you're the owner of record. What is your relationship?*

*Fowlds: former neighbor. I own Grand Realty. I was asked to go through the property and evaluate last week to see if there's a plan forward to help with the situation. Mai has been helpful with trying to wrap my head around the Category 3. Here to learn and help if I can.*

*Moermond: we also have a tax assessment to talk about today, but first we're going to talk about removal of the nuisance of this property. Whether that is rehabilitation or demolition. [Moermond gives background of appeals process & requirements for rehabilitation of property]*

*Marsh: I am an attorney, yes. Representing US Bank.*

*Staff report by Supervisor James Hoffman: the building is a two story, wood frame, single-family dwelling with a detached two-stall garage on a lot of 5,663 square feet. In March 2022, Code Inspector Kedrowski spoke to property owner about the condition of*

*the exterior of the property. She indicated she had shut the house down temporarily to stay with her mother. The property was referred Vacant Buildings with files opened on March 7, 2022. The current property owner is Joanne A Backer, per Amanda and Ramsey County Property records. On March 19, 2024, an inspection of the building was conducted, a list of deficiencies which constitute a nuisance condition was developed and photographs were taken. An Order to Abate a Nuisance Building was posted on March 24, 2025, with a compliance date of April 23, 2025. As of this date, the property remains in a condition which comprises a nuisance as defined by the legislative code.*

*Taxation has placed an estimated market value of \$83,800 on the land and \$217,600 on the building. Real estate taxes are current. The vacant building registration fees were paid by assessment on April 2, 2025. As of June 9, 2025, a Code Compliance Inspection has not been done. As of June 9, 2025, the \$5,000 performance deposit has not been posted.*

*There have been eight Summary Abatement notices since 2022. There have been three work orders issued for: boarding/securing. Code Enforcement Officers estimate the cost to repair this structure exceeds \$150,000. The estimated cost to demolish exceeds \$30,000.*

*Moermond: sounds like your mother wasn't doing well, you closed up the house to take care of her. Tell me where you are at with respect to the house and moving forward.*

*Backer: I stayed with my mother while she was dying, but I went every day to collect mail and take care of the yard. I continued to do that, so I was surprised my building got classified as a Vacant Building. I didn't feel it was vacant since I was paying utilities and was there and cleaning up the yard as long as I physically could. I was receiving mail there. After I sold my mother's house I thought maybe my house needed some repairs. I felt there were deficiencies in the plumbing and heating. I didn't have air conditioning. My plan was originally to rehab the house and then sell because I didn't think living in a 2-story home was a good idea since in 2023 I was diagnosed with 2 very serious lung diseases. I thought it would be good to move to one-level which is when I moved to Kellogg Square. I did put in a change of address, but I never got anything from the City regarding subsequent complaints. I had assessments and paid the taxes. I've kept them current. I've hired people to mow the yard. I paid someone to shovel the walks. My plan was to sell and I didn't have any knowledge of what my building was classified as. When I found out that it was made a Category 3 and I started talking to Mr. Hoffman about the categories. I was wondering if there was any way we could move it to a Category 2 to more easily get someone in and buy and rehab it properly. I don't have the resources to rehab it. I was hoping to find a buyer to take it as is. I understand that would make it easier to sell.*

*Moermond: no. Here we are. There's been no action taken for a number of years. No inspections. City has been out boarding. Looking at the exterior I can see it needs significant repair and often that reflects the interior. What I am able to do is say there is the possibility you could sell the property but I would look for the purchase agreement to reflect that the title doesn't transfer until the Code Compliance certificate is issued. I use the term "partner" because they're taking a financial risk but they also have that purchase agreement that holds you responsible. They may have other documents to protect their interests. A mortgage so the purchaser could foreclose if they need to. Protections for both parties, which is a private deal. You may want legal advice. I do see a way forward. The fact you're sitting here with a realtor you trust is*

great.

*Fowlds: I've done a dozen or so Category 2's and a bank do a Category 3. It is hard to get someone to take that risk if they can't take title. I know it does happen, but it is pretty complicated and tricky.*

*Moermond: I see it done a lot here. We can give you references of different cases. It is possible. Your property value that Ramsey County has is \$83,000 for the parcel. You may get a more premium price for that. That's noticeable for your property versus other I see. Ms. Marsh, anything to add?*

*Marsh: at this point US Bank is not in title to remediate the violation. Payments are current. We aren't able to provide much at this point.*

*Moermond: where is the mortgage at in terms of being paid down?*

*Marsh: it is currently \$10,863.46 in unpaid principle.*

*Moermond: that's fabulous news. Between the parcel value and the mortgage value you have the potential to do better than I normally see. Talk to people who want to buy it and may want to buy the parcel and remove the house. I say this is because that's one way to solve the nuisance problem. The City washes its hands at that point. Whoever you are getting your legal, real estate and financial advice from you would want to talk to about exploring all those options. You have carrying costs for a house that gives you no real benefit. You should be able to use that money to pay for where you're actually living. I think next steps for you is sending you a letter with the things we talked about and letting you talk to some trusted advisors about what the right choices are for you now and what makes the most sense. If the person or company buying the property wants to fix it up, you will need the Code Compliance Inspection Report done and have a Performance Deposit posted. If that is a decent possibility of where things go, you'll need to spend that money to get the team inspection done.*

*Backer: I'm adrift here. Who else would I turn to in this situation besides my real estate advisor?*

*Moermond: some people have financial advisors, or lawyers they trust to review documents. Realtors who are professionals who would be doing the transactions on your behalf. You may want advice from all 3. You may have interest to talk to people in each area depending on your circumstances.*

*Backer: I'm totally ignorant on this matter. What legal documents?*

*Moermond: there are a couple of documents you MAY want to have reviewed: the purchase agreement itself. It is up to you how you manage that. You need your own advice.*

*Backer: in considering my options for disposing of the property, so to speak, if someone is interested in buying the property and then demolishing for rebuilding, do all these other fees or things apply?*

*Moermond: if you decide to sell and they want to demolish then it is crafting a resolution for the Council to order it removed giving a specific length of time and in that time we'd look for a demolition contractor to pull permits to do the demo. If that is underway it is monitored. We understand from experience there are often delays doing*

*this. Let's talk in a couple of weeks about a couple of paths you may take.*

*Fowlds: if she moves towards the City doing the demo, does the \$5,000 Performance Deposit still need to be posted?*

*Moermond: no, no Performance Deposit or Code Compliance Inspection Report needed.*

*Backer: the house was constructed in 1916 or thereabouts.*

*Moermond: we tend to see less hazardous materials in older houses, it is small, made of wood. All those go towards lower costs, though no promises since we don't have bids. Let's talk June 24 even though we won't have the benefit of staff at that hearing.*

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 6/24/2025**

**2**      [RLH TA 25-264](#)

**Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1510 LAUREL AVENUE. (File No. J2510B, Assessment No. 258109)**

**Sponsors:**      Bowie

*Approve the assessment.*

*Joanne Backer, owner, appeared*

*Dan Fowlds realtor & former neighbor, appeared*

*Staff report by Supervisor James Hoffman: inspector Gavin had the property and January 15, 2025 saw there was a garage window open to entry so called in a non-emergency boarding to have it secured.*

*Backer: I was totally unaware. The house has been boarded; I hired someone.*

*Hoffman: Summary Abatement Order was sent January 7 to secure the garage before January 13. Sent to Joanne Backer at 1510 Laurel since we had no updated ownership location at that time.*

*Moermond: returned mail?*

*Hoffman: yes, several notes of returned mail.*

*Moermond: you did the boarding because the boards are plywood. The City contractors paint them gray. These are for windows in the garage but the mail bounced back. You didn't get notice. At the same time the City fulfilled its obligation to send notice to owner of Record with Ramsey County. Sounds like Ramsey County taxation wasn't aware of your changed address. A week to do it and it wasn't done. It is serious because people do move into garages and they have died. I think you're stuck with this assessment.*

*Backer: I'm fine paying the boarding fee, but I don't want to pay all the extra processing fees.*

*Moermond: I understand, but it is the cost of handling this as an assessment and the contract with the boarding company. I wouldn't recommend a decrease, but you certainly can talk to the Council about that and ask for a decrease.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 7/16/2025**

3      [RLH TA 25-275](#)      Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1762 ENGLEWOOD AVENUE. (File No. VB2510, Assessment No. 258810)

Sponsors:      Privratsky

*Layover to July 8, 2025 10 am for review of work plan. Recommendation forthcoming.*

*Mike Mortimer, owner, appeared via phone*

*Lana Ferguson, wife, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor James Hoffman: Opened as a Category 1 Fire due to fire damage. Outstanding Vacant Building fee from December 27, 2024 through December 27, 2025. Renewal letter November 27 and warning letter December 27. Changed to a Category 2 due to work being done. History of orders on the property. Three Summary Abatement Orders written. All done by owner. February 21, 2025 most recent orders for garbage, also done by owner.*

*Mortimer: I never had an inspector come out from the City. I've had building inspectors. Clint is the guy's name. Clint Zane has come out and seen what we've done and okayed it. Another inspector is from the area and stopped in many times. I'm not working with anyone—no one ever calls or comes out to see—I'm sure they just drive by.*

*Lana Ferguson: they're talking about garbage complaints.*

*Mortimer: this last winter we hauled a bunch of stuff out. I have no idea what the City is trying to do. Matt Dornfeld used to come out.*

*Moermond: he was out last week.*

*Mortimer: he was? Why don't they ever call and tell me they are going to be there?*

*Moermond: they can see what they need to from the exterior. We've been dealing with this for several years. I really want you to get this rehab done. You said you're getting close, what does that look like?*

*Mortimer: finishing countertops and sinks and that stuff. Trying to finish floors. It is painted and I have one fire door left to do downstairs. New stairway, new entry on back. I removed a big pile of dirt from underneath the crawl space. Four new furnaces that---*

*Moermond: you have a rough in inspection done on mechanical, warm air, plumbing and electric. None have been finalized. I hear your contractors are done with the work but they need to get the inspectors out to final those permits. Apollo Heating. Christopher Brunsumon. That would be great to get those finalized. Then you have some building items left. It is June and those permits were pulled in March of 2024. They're getting old.*

*Mortimer: we're getting wrapped up. Countertops done so we can finish the plumbing. It is hard. We run into stuff all the time to fix. No one has come from your department at all to see what's going onside.*

*Moermond: to be clear, it isn't my department. Mr. Hoffman, can you speak to the*

*Vacant Building items?*

*Hoffman: Matt has been out once a month since the start of the year. He's there to check on progress on the rehab and check to make sure its secure and there's no trash or long grass. His purpose isn't to do with the rehab side. He's looking at property maintenance and whether or not it is secure of vacant when he should be.*

*Mortimer: a judge said to me at court what is taking you so long to do this job? I said Ma'am they won't give me the permit to do the work. Then she said get him a permit. Then I got one a month and half later. Then the plumber called and said they won't give me a permit. Then the heating guy---I told him to go back to the court---*

*Moermond: that would be me.*

*Mortimer: then that person told them to get these people a permit. Then they got permits to do the work.*

*Moermond: I believe the problem was they were trying to pull permits online but in this situation they have to be done in person. What I want to see happen is to get you done with this thing. You have \$5,000 hanging over your head. You're arguing that Vacant Building inspectors haven't talked with you. Department of Safety & Inspections is saying they don't do that for Vacant Buildings. They'll visit the exterior and make sure it is secure and things are maintained and then leave. I'm hearing you want to see the Vacant Building fee decreased or deleted due to lack of services?*

*Mortimer: doors have been locked for years. They didn't check any doors. The basement door had been kicked in the other day and I fixed that.*

*Moermond: I'd like a plan of when you'll get out of the Vacant Building program and when permits will be finaled. I need something to hang my hat on that to look at possibly decreasing or prorating your fee.*

*Mortimer: about a year ago I started having health problems (lists cardiac concerns/procedures). It has set me back quite a bit. That's been going on for 2 years. I'm lucky to be alive.*

*Lana Ferguson: he's having problems from his heart operation. He isn't recovering as quickly as they thought.*

*Moermond: I appreciate the background, but I don't need details on the record. I want to protect your medical privacy. I'm really hoping your contractors can complete their work. I understand your health is impeding some of the work. In the records I have a company called Dotson LLP doing your building work. Reaching out to them would be helpful. That permit was from February 2023. The contractor should be getting that permit finaled; it is more than 2 years old. You need to call to get those people out. I hear you doing the work yourself, that may not be viable anymore. Consider all your options. I'd like to give you a chance to share your plans, but I'm looking for a way out of this for you go. This isn't getting easier; it is getting harder each year. This is losing money for you the longer it takes you. You aren't benefiting from bringing in rent or living there. Getting this off your plate, off our plate, is the best for everyone. Please take some time to put a plan together for getting done and share it so we can craft a solution on this one. Share a plan with Joanna Zimny to update us and we can have another conversation.*

*Mortimer: anything works for me. The taxes have been paid.*

*Moermond: I know, you're paying those fees and taxes but not getting any money out of the property. No income.*

*Mortimer: that's due to my health.*

*Moermond: if we go a month out, does that still work? July 8th.*

*Mortimer: yes.*

*Lana Ferguson: I was wondering about the Vacant Building guy who has been out and reported back to you? If you have a building under construction you have waste going somewhere. We pick it up all the time. If it has been reported it isn't unkempt we just have more to take to the dump.*

*Moermond: I understand.*

*Mortimer: I haul it just about every day. Clint Zane is the best inspector you have got and looked over the foundation and floor joists and walls we've built.*

*Moermond: I appreciate that and I have access to his notes. I want to see that plan.*

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 7/8/2025**

**4**      [RLH RR 25-16](#)

Ordering the rehabilitation or razing and removal of the structures at 692 SIXTH STREET EAST within five (5) days after the June 18, 2025, City Council Public Hearing.

**Sponsors:**          Johnson

*Current recommendation is to remove within 5 days with no option to repair.*

*Mark Ciccarelli, owner, appeared*

*Ciccarelli: it got convoluted because Amiri wasn't communicating with me. He was getting all the letters. I originally bought the property and he was going to work with my guys funding the material to do the work. The City said you have to have plans first because of the fire. I didn't know that when I purchased. I get that is my fault, my responsibility. I was working and wasn't able to follow up. 2 years ago people were still so busy and I couldn't find someone to do it reasonably. I lost track of it some until about 8 months ago and they weren't communicating to me from Amiri's side and here I am now. I do have a guy who owns several houses and has the capability to do it.*

*Moermond: where is he?*

*Ciccarelli: he's back in town tomorrow. I didn't know about the hearing 2 weeks ago. I have a guy who will purchase and pay the assessments and taxes. He wanted to get it back to Category 2. That's what he wants to do. I do commercial work.*

*Moermond: I bet he does. It has been in the Vacant Building program for six years and having had a major fire. Nothing has happened at all. I take a dim view on fire damaged buildings hanging out in the neighborhood.*

*Ciccarelli: he said he'd have the plans and house renovated within six months.*

Moermond: I have nothing here. Mr. Hoffman?

Staff report by Supervisor James Hoffman: The building is a two story, wood frame, single-family dwelling on a lot of 6,011 square feet. Fire Certificate of Occupancy condemned the property and ordered property vacated on February 4, 2019. The property was referred to Vacant Buildings with files opened on February 21, 2019.

The current property owner is Hossein Varasteh Amiri and Mark Ciccarelli, per Amanda and Ramsey County Property records. On February 5, 2025, an inspection of the building was conducted, a list of deficiencies which constitute a nuisance condition was developed and photographs were taken. An Order to Abate a Nuisance Building was posted on February 10, 2025, with a compliance date of March 12, 2025. As of this date, the property remains in a condition which comprises a nuisance as defined by the legislative code. Taxation has placed an estimated market value of \$23,900 on the land and \$33,800 on the building. Real estate taxes for the second half of 2023 and all of 2024 are delinquent in the amount of \$5,882, which includes penalty and interest. The property is scheduled for forfeiture on July 31, 2027. The vacant building registration fees were paid by assessment on March 3, 2025. A Code Compliance Inspection was done on June 5, 2023 and has since expired. As of May 12, 2025, the \$5,000 performance deposit has not been posted.

There have been twenty-five Summary Abatement notices since 2019. There have been twenty-six work orders issued for: Garbage/rubbish, Boarding/securing, Tall grass/weeds and Snow/ice. Code Enforcement Officers estimate the cost to repair this structure exceeds \$150,000. The estimated cost to demolish exceeds \$30,000.

Moermond: you want it turned to a Category 2 so your acquaintance can do it. I don't make those recommendations to Council. You're a Category 3.

[Moermond explains difference between Category 2 and Category 3 Vacant Buildings]

Hoffman: this was a Category 1 for the longest time. I was driving into work during Covid and I saw a fire, and knew it was a Vacant Building. I was the one who called the St. Paul Fire Department and was trapped there until the fire was put out.

Moermond: here we are six years later. On May 13 I saw complete abandonment of the property.

Ciccarelli: I understand. We bought this 2 years ago.

Moermond: July 24, 2023.

Ciccarelli: right. Spring of 2024 the guys were out and got a notice to stop work until permits were pulled. We were just doing general cleanup. They said you can't pull permits until there's a plan since it's a Category 2. I started to talk to some people about a plan last year. Couldn't make it happen. It was so far out my realm of expertise I started looking at selling. They kept saying they were going to do it. Amiri isn't communicating. They aren't doing the work. Dragging it along. I've now hooked up with a guy over the last month. He owns 100 homes This is expertise. He owns 6 or 7 homes in the area.

Moermond: when I conducted the hearing on May 13. Notice did go to owner on record. Problem with notice is on you. You do have a Council Public Hearing June 18th. Next

week. You want to be ready to show them your earnestness in doing this. What I don't have is paid taxes. No current Code Compliance Inspection Report. No Performance Deposit. I DO have a property with a lot of orders to maintain because you haven't been.

Ciccarelli: if I do all those things, I don't want to do it just to have someone tell me no.

Moermond: the Council will issue an order. I can guarantee you they will say "show me yours first". I've made my recommendation and I'm not hearing anything to change my mind.

Ciccarelli: I don't disagree with you.

**Referred to the City Council due back on 6/18/2025**

### **Making Finding on Nuisance Abatements**

- 5      [RLH RR 25-17](#)      First Making finding on the appealed substantial abatement ordered for 887 CHARLES AVENUE in Council File RLH RR 24-17.

**Sponsors:**      Bowie

*Recommendation forthcoming.*

*Voicemail left at 11:06 am: this is Marcia Moermond from St. Paul City Council calling Kyle Runbeck. You would have received a letter from my office a month ago about today's hearing and to check the progress. We haven't heard from you. You didn't schedule an inspection with Clint Zane to determine percentage complete. Because we don't have that I can only assume it is a small percentage. I would suggest you reach out to him immediately to schedule that, otherwise I can only assume the worst. Hopefully I can get that report from Mr. Zane, and you are in danger of losing your Performance Deposit if not your grant of time. We'll be in touch with a follow up email. Reach out to Mr. Zane, immediately.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 6/25/2025**

### **10:00 a.m. Hearings**

#### **Special Tax Assessments**

- 6      [RLH TA 25-269](#)      Deleting the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 733 CARROLL AVENUE. (File No. J2510B, Assessment No. 258109)

**Sponsors:**      Bowie

*Delete the assessment.*

*Carol Patrick, owner, appeared via phone*

*Moermond: looking at the cost of the boarding. Terrible circumstances. Did the officers say anything about it cost something to board?*

*Patrick: no, he just said he'd call a service. It was after midnight, I said I guess. There was no cost, I had no idea. I could have probably got a neighbor to do it the next day.*

*He just said he had a service to come.*

*Moermond: I think he should have told you it cost money. I'm going to recommend this is deleted.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 7/16/2025**

- 7      [RLH TA 25-272](#)      Deleting the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 646 FULLER AVENUE. (File No. J2510B, Assessment No. 258109)

**Sponsors:**      Bowie

*Delete the assessment (welfare check).*

*No one appeared*

*Moermond: this was a welfare check. Mr. Bowen has also talked about how he ended up in the hospital and because it was a welfare check. I will recommend deletion.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 7/16/2025**

- 8      [RLH TA 25-265](#)      Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 245 MARYLAND AVENUE EAST (1285 L'ORIENT STREET). (File No. VB2510, Assessment No. 258810)

**Sponsors:**      Kim

*Approve the assessment.*

*Anna Watson, o/b/o St. Paul Port Authority (owner), appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor James Hoffman: Vacant Building registration billed September 5, 2024. Renewal Letter December 3, 2024 and warning letter January 2, 2025. Vacant Building since January 2, 2020. Recently sold to the St. Paul Port Authority the end of 2024. It is the old K-Mart site. Secured 4 times since the first of this year. Known problem property.*

*Watson: the first letter was sent to the old owners. We didn't have any background on the Vacant Building status and registration. It says the period was September through December last year. I understand those fees go to new ownership, I did however speak with Robert Humphrey and we are hoping to demo in the next few months. He said if we'd have known about the Vacant Building and talked to him he may have been able to exempt us, if it was before it went to assessment. The previous owner was supposed to pay this fee.*

*Moermond: the first thing I'll say is Robert Humphrey would have been acting outside his legal authority on waiving this fee. This fee goes January 2025 through January 2026. I'm also glad this project is moving forward. As it stands now it does continue to be a nuisance building. Disclosure of the Vacant Building status should have been handed in the closing. It is really a matter between you and seller. It is hard to imagine the SPPA bought it not understanding it was a Vacant Building, but I know these things can happen. I'm going to recommend approval; it has presented a significant problem over the years and continues to do so. We wouldn't pick up any fight between*

*you and previous owner, that's private matter.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 7/16/2025**

**9**      [RLH TA 25-242](#)

Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 995 MINNEHAHA AVENUE WEST. (File No. VB2509, Assessment No. 258808)

**Sponsors:**      Bowie

*Approve and make payable over 5 years.*

*Ray James, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor James Hoffman: this is a Vacant Building opened September 27, 2023. Given a 90-day waiver. The renewal letter went out August 28, 2024 and warning letter December 27, 2024. Ongoing open permits. Work ongoing.*

*James: my electrician was pulling permits initially. He passed away. That caused a delay. Now I have the right crew and we're busting it. I can be done in sixty days. I've always been working but it has been one thing or another. If I could get a little extension, I can get it done within 60 days definitely.*

*Moermond: I see Department of Safety & Inspections waived the fee and did that in September. It has been in the Vacant Building program since 2023. The waiver was for the 2024-2025 bill. If you're done by the Council Public Hearing June 18th you have already been in the program 9 months out of 12. The Council may look at it differently. I can make it payable over a number of years.*

*James: that's nice of you but I was hoping for an extension so I don't have to pay. Laws the law man. I'm from this neighborhood, I'm trying to invest back in the neighborhood.*

*Moermond: I'm glad you're doing this work. The City also incurs expenses. Again, the Council may look at things differently.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 6/18/2025**

**Staff Reports**

**10**      [SR 25-88](#)

Review Request of Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1350 HAGUE AVENUE adopted by Council on May 15, 2024 under File RLH AR 24-25. (File No. VB2407, Assessment No. 248806)

**Sponsors:**      Bowie

*Layover to LH July 15, 2025 at 10 am. Staff to follow up with Building Inspector.*

*Ashley Taylor, owner, appeared via phone*

*Bradley Taylor, owner, appeared*

*Staff report by Supervisor James Hoffman: unpaid Vacant Building fee for October 27, 2023 through October 27, 2024. There was a demo permit pulled for the primary*

*building, and an accessory building remains. Permits pulled for the accessory to become a primary and that's where the confusion was. Typically, when you have a demo permit you have to demo both buildings.*

*Moermond: when was the permit pulled?*

*Hoffman: I don't see one. There was work being done in 2022 without a Code Compliance and it was red tagged in December 2022. Demo permit was pulled September 2018 and finalized October 2018. Main structure was down, but they gave the ok to leave the block structure. I'm seeing a note that because the remaining structure was vacant the property was to remain in the Vacant Building program until something was done with it.*

*Moermond: and this is 2023 through 2024?*

*Hoffman: yes.*

*Moermond: and March of 2024 it sounds like it left the Vacant Building program as a result of a file review versus a permit.*

*Hoffman: correct.*

*Moermond: no permits for change of use, which would normally be a code analysis. Is there a Fire Certificate of Occupancy on this?*

*Hoffman: don't see one. I do see a building permit for a pergola.*

*Moermond: no Certificate of Occupancy. Old one that revoked.*

*Hoffman: change of use was inspected.*

*Ashley Taylor: no Certificate of Occupancy yet, we're working with John Wilder. We've had 2 finalized plumbing inspections. Electrical, mechanical and gas all through the City. We were receiving letters for the Vacant Building charged, called Department of Safety & Inspections multiple times and talked to many people. Bradley even went in person. It sounded like everyone was confused and told us to ignore the letter and it would be taken off. We were sitting next to each other when those conversations were had. We were very surprised to find this out 2 years later. We talked to Matt Dornfeld and Clint Zane multiple times and they just seemed confused. The demo happened before we purchased. We kept being told it was a mistake and would be taken off so didn't think further action was needed. We're very surprised with this assessment, like I said.*

*Moermond: when did you talk to Department of Safety & Inspections? Notes say February 2024, does that sound right?*

*Asha Taylor: 6 to 8 times, fall of 2023. They were phone calls, aside from the one in person. We do have texts from someone for the contact information for 2 other inspectors. That was October/November 2023. We called every time we got a letter or notice. We received the same answer every time we contacted someone one.*

*Moermond: remaining structure remained in the Vacant Building program as of April 23, 2019. March 2024 I can see conversations with Department of Safety & Inspections initiated in February and those were where documents were brought in for*

*change in use. They got you out of the Vacant Building program right after that. Without a Fire Certificate of Occupancy and still having open permits should this have a fee for 2023 through 2024 is the question?*

*What I can see now tells me yes, we should. Having pulled permits isn't the same as being out of the program. If it was being used I can say you should have a Fire Certificate of Occupancy and didn't. What's the timeline for getting this done and having Certificate of Occupancy?*

*Ashley Taylor: hopefully this week. A building inspection and electrical this week. Our confusion is we called multiple Vacant Building inspectors in 2023, what could we have done differently when we feel we were proactive about being in the Vacant Building program and being told it was a mistake?*

*Moermond: honestly, I'm not sure it was a mistake looking at the file. Mr. Hoffman?*

*Hoffman: it is a very unique situation.*

*Bradley Taylor: the first thing Clint Zane said was "oh, this property". That's the same thing he said.*

*Moermond: I'd like more follow up from Mr. Zane on this. What I have in front of me now, I don't know how much assistance I can be. You got double assessments for 2024 to 2025 and 2025 to 2026. I'd like to get a response from Mr. Zane in writing. I want to learn more but I want to be clear where I'm at.*

*Ashley Taylor: I know inspectors have lots of properties but this is our baby, we remember everything. We did our due diligence in 2023 and to be told it was a mistake. If we hadn't been we could have acted at that point, but we were directed to do the opposite. It is frustrating we were directed differently, not just one time but 6 or 7 different times.*

*Moermond: I can tell you that Vacant Building registration forms would have been mailed out and each and every assessment can also be appealed. That would have got you talking to me, which was the fastest way out. You can have conversations with staff, but the opportunity to get it squared away didn't happen. I get you say you didn't do anything because you were told it was squared away, but you did get notice of the tax assessment. You didn't appeal because you thought you were getting what you wanted from Department of Safety & Inspections staff, which I think was bad advice but is still representative of the City. We'll look at this again in a month, let's talk July 15th again.*

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 7/15/2025**

**11      [SR 25-106](#)**

Review Request of Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Collection of Vacant Building Registration fees billed during March 11 to October 17, 2024 at 1003 ARCADE STREET. (File No. VB2508, Assessment No. 258807)

**Sponsors:**      Yang

*Approve the assessment as ratified on May 14, 2025.*

*la Ly, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Moermond: we're revisiting this case; it has already been ratified. I agreed to do that. This is unusual.*

*Staff report by Supervisor James Hoffman: this is the 2024 to 2025 fee. September 7, 2025 anniversary date. Renewal letter August 8, 2024 and given a 90-day waiver by Legislative Hearing officer. Warning letter went out November 7, 2024. Appellant stated she was told to change address at Ramsey County at previous hearing which she indicated she did. Nothing was mentioned about address change at last hearing. Property owner stated she did not receive notice of assessment hearings. Notice of hearing went to 1003 Arcade St, which is the address of record with Ramsey County. The 3 Vacant Building letters were sent to 1) Mai Tria Archibald, 8255 - 9th Street North, Oakdale, MN 55128; 2) Mai Tria Archibald/La Ly, 1003 Arcade Street, St Paul 55106; and 3) Ia On Ly, 2230 Oak Glen Crescent, Stillwater MN 55082. The Stillwater address was reflected in the mailing because a Vacant Building form was filled and filed with the Department of Safety & Inspections on March 7, 2024 but was not changed with Ramsey County. Staff emailed Ramsey County to confirm date of address change and response was that the address was updated on May 16, 2025. The Vacant Building file is still open.*

*Ly: First of all, we haven't been getting notices. I am not sure where they are going to. I asked for email and received an email after the last appeal in September. She gave us 90 days to bring our building back up to move out of Vacant Buildings. However, the building is in a shape where realistically it could not be done in 3 months. We leave it up to the contractors to work on it because there is a list of 100 items to do. As they are working there are permits being pulled, it goes in sequence. That's why we couldn't get it up to code by the November date. If you pull records you can see the Contractor is licensed and working with the City for permits and inspections. However, we did get good news it finally passed all inspections last week. HVAC was the last item, it had 3 inspections. I only found about the assessment when I went to pay the property taxes. I think it was May 16th. I asked her if the address was changed, and she said yes I already have a mailing address in their system. I'm asking it to be waived. We've spent so much money on the building already.*

*Moermond: First, I DID recommend to the Council that you had a 90-day waiver, so if you had finished in that period we wouldn't be looking at any fee. You indicated it was harder than anticipated. I believe I would have told you that the Department of Safety & Inspections doesn't have the computer ability to send emails. My office does, but that isn't something their system can do. When they send out the Vacant Building registration letters, like the one you appealed, those go to BOTH the owner of record with Ramsey County AND whoever filled out the Vacant Building registration form.*

*With respect to the Ramsey County change of address, when we reviewed the record it looks like your City Council Public Hearing, when they ratified, was May 14 and it wasn't until May 16 that the County reflected a change in address. The assessment being mailed to the addresses it was WAS consistent with the address on record of the tax owner with Ramsey County. I am hearing your appeal today. I don't believe there was any notice issues. It is a courtesy to do this appeal today.*

*I see 5 open permits still at the property and 2 finalized. The majority of the work hasn't been signed off on. This is September 8, 2024 through September 7, 2025. We're 3 months away from another year passing. We're 9 out of 12 months and counting.*

*Ly: I'd like to talk to the Council about this. I'm asking for the Certificate of Occupancy*

*before I sign off on the contracting work.*

*Moermond: my recommendation is the appeal be denied. Council Public Hearing June 24, 2025.*

**Received and Filed**

### **Special Tax Assessments-ROLLS**

- 12     [RLH AR 25-56](#)     Ratifying the assessment for Collection of Vacant Building Registration fees billed during September 5 to December 20, 2024. (File No. VB2510, Assessment No. 258810)

**Sponsors:**     Noecker

**Referred to the City Council due back on 7/16/2025**

- 13     [RLH AR 25-57](#)     Ratifying the assessment for Securing and/or Emergency Boarding services during January 2025. (File No. J2510B, Assessment No. 258109)

**Sponsors:**     Noecker

**Referred to the City Council due back on 7/16/2025**

- 14     [RLH AR 25-58](#)     Ratifying the assessment for Demolition services from November to December 2024 (C.D.B.G. Funds). (File No. J2505C, Assessment No. 252005)

**Sponsors:**     Noecker

**Referred to the City Council due back on 7/16/2025**

### **11:00 a.m. Hearings**

#### **Summary & Vehicle Abatement Orders**

- 15     [RLH SAO 25-43](#)     Appeal of Carlos Block to a Summary Abatement Order at 2125 AMES AVENUE.

**Sponsors:**     Yang

*Grant to July 14, 2025 for compliance.*

*Carlos Block, owner, appeared*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor James Hoffman: Summary Abatement Order was sent to remove branches with a compliance date of May 28th. Appeal was filed.*

*Moermond: primary violation was the brush and wood? Then we also have trees debris and trailer.*

*Block: the pictures are misleading. It is about 30 yards from my house, way in the corner. About a year ago a tree fell in my neighbor's yard, so I cut it down to manageable pieces. My intent was to cut and use as it dries as firewood. I stacked it as neatly as I could in the corner. I was planning to cut it smaller. There are other branches that came down this year, those are moved already. What I've been doing is composting the leaves and I mix them with compost and when they start to look like dirt I put them in the black containers. I'm building inside my garage containers to put them in. That isn't a trailer, it is a cart. People built it years ago and I use it for logs and stuff. It was behind the garage because there's a slab back there but it is covered it mud. It isn't a legal trailer. Someone built it. If you put it in front you'll say it's a nuisance. My neighbor told me she was going to call. I plan to use everything, but if I have to move it I can. My truck broke down, so I don't have a vehicle to move without a lot of money. I'm not against it. But if it is there I'm going to use it. That's why I appealed.*

*Moermond: when the City contemplates firewood storage it wants it off the ground so it doesn't harbor rodents and stays dry in a way the wood doesn't rot or decompose and create heat. This appears to be more brush.*

*Block: it is a mixture of both. I know the leaves look terrible. Right on the other side there is more dirt. When he took the photo he took it from edge of garage, but if you can see further in it is more black dirt. I did move it to the containers.*

*Moermond: and the goal is to have that moved to raised beds?*

*Block: yes ma'am. I'm hoping to have them done soon. Mother's day was my goal, I didn't make that. I think the next month. Then that will be in those containers.*

*Moermond: storage of kindling—a pile of brush isn't working for me. I'd like to think of something similar to regular firewood.*

*Hoffman: off the ground, 2x4 structure with a lean to roof so it stays dry is something we've seen happened.*

*Moermond: distance from structures. 45.03 Firewood. Piles of wood cut for fuel which are detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the public because of conditions including, but not limited to, improper or unsafe storage, un-elevated piles of wood, excessive quantities, conducive to vermin harborage, and more than five (5) feet in height or closer than ten (10) feet to a habitable building. A containment of this that is elevated, no taller than 5 feet, and 10 feet from a HABITABLE building. So it can be closer to the garage, but not the house. Building something to store that and not have it be the size of a car. There are ways to contain this that I could live with.*

*With respect to compost, getting it into containers is key. It does need to be some distance from a structure, similar to firewood. Let's talk about deadlines. July 14th.*

*Banks: I will have it done*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 6/25/2025**

**1:00 p.m. Hearings**

## Vacant Building Registrations

- 16     [RLH VBR 25-26](#)     Appeal of Brett Johnson, tenant, to a Vacant Building Registration Requirement at 1514 CARROLL AVENUE.

Sponsors:     Bowie

*Deny the appeal. Property remains a VB and must be vacant.*

*Brett Johnson, occupant, appeared*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Moermond: for the record, you are not the owner. This is an action taken on the owner.*

*Staff report by Supervisor Matt Dornfeld: Made a Category 2 Vacant Building on April 14, 2025 per a condemnation referral by Inspector Kedrowski for no water service. According to Inspector K the property owner was placed in a nursing home and stated she didn't want anyone occupying the home and had no intention of restoring water service. To date, I understand the house to remain occupied by the appellant and we're here today to discuss that.*

*Moermond: the condemnation was issued by Department of Safety & Inspections April 4, 2025. No appeal of that action. 10 days later it was put into the Vacant Building program and there was an appeal of that action.*

*Johnson: I've lived there for 10 years. The last 2 years I've been taking care of Rebecca as an unofficial aunt. Medical information given] I ended up leaving. Her sister was involved, but didn't take steps to make sure Rebecca was safe. I've been through this before. I ended up calling the ambulance 4 times in the last six months she was there. She died en route to the hospital and her whole family was like thanks for saving her. I knew that was going to be why I was there. She ended up really needing help and no one was there to step in or have a conservatorship. Ultimately I've always been a tenant to her. I feel like I should have at least an eviction notice. It isn't easy to find a place now. I've talked to her family. They want nothing to do with the property. It has been foreclosed on. I was under the impression I would have the six months to find a place once it was sold at the sheriff's sale the 20th of April. This all stems from the water being shut off. I'm happy living in my car if I have to. I just want the opportunity to not be thrown on the streets and to find a place. I have lease documents but they're in her family's possession but we never had any legal documents. Just had a good relationship. I took care of her and she gave me cheap rent. She does have a power of attorney now who wants nothing to do with this.*

*Moermond: my take on this is the property condemned the beginning of April is the key starting this out. That condemnation makes it by definition under chapter 43 a Vacant Building. It would need to go through a number of steps to be habitable again. I want to say that if there were a way for you to continue being there the City would only respect the power of attorney who has decision-making authority over the property becoming the Responsible Party and getting a Certificate of Occupancy since the owner of record is no longer living there. We don't have that. Two things going on. No one should be living there per the condemnation. Will the City kick you out and board the structure? This isn't the equivalent of an eviction proceeding with the bank or owner. Mr. Dornfeld, how do you handle cases like this?*

*Dornfeld: we have many options. In this case we obviously have issued Summary Abatement Orders and Excessive Consumption fines and other form of written communication that are going to the property owner who obviously isn't able to see or deal with them. I did text with the appellant. He knows he isn't supposed to legally be there. It comes down to vacating and securing the property.*

*Johnson: I'm not good at articulating what has happened. I wasn't proactive in the beginning contacting the water department. They said they needed to see the meter, I made that appointment and they never showed. I went in person. Said they'd said someone in 2 days. I put a note on the door just in case. They never showed that day either. That's when I got suspicious and talked to Richard. He mentioned---I sent a voicemail transcript---it was very clear he had his mind made up being he has known "Becky" (Rebecca) for so long. She got along with him. I'm not sure he know she wasn't cognitively well. She's known for having strong opinions randomly. I went and visited her and brought her to her house and she had no idea that she wasn't living there anymore. That's when I knew something was seriously wrong.*

*Moermond: the house is condemned. That wasn't appealed. It continues to be condemned until it meets the criteria to get out of that state. The Vacant Building registration is the right thing to do. I'm not hearing why this shouldn't be a registered Vacant Building. Typically, people talk about the steps for re-occupancy at this point and the Vacant Building fee. The steps taken would be things only the owner or their representative to do. You are not that person. You are not empowered to act on behalf of the owner. I can only say that from everything I've seen this is correctly in the Vacant Building program and Mr. Dornfeld or his staff are responsible for enforcement of the orders.*

*I'm going to put this on for Council Public Hearing on June 18th. That means Mr. Dornfeld can take action beginning Thursday. If you want to testify that is your next stop. We'll send a follow up letter Friday by email. I'm sorry I couldn't be more helpful today.*

*Johnson: I wasn't given a chance to appeal anything before that. Why wasn't I given the opportunity to appeal this right at the beginning?*

*Moermond: notice went to the owner of record. If she has otherwise designated someone to be decision-maker she'd be notified if we knew. It isn't in the Fire Certificate of Occupancy program. It requires we placard the doors with the condemnation and Vacant Building placards. That would be why.*

*Dornfeld: all the paperwork was issued for it to be vacated and secured. That means St. Paul Police Department and staff showing up and vacating it and then boarding it up. That's the end result of this. That can happen any moment after the Council rules on it.*

*Johnson: may I ask what you'd recommend---besides move out?*

*Moermond: he's not a housing counselor. We'll give you the House Calls Brochure. Hopefully you can get some assistance there.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 6/18/2025**

Notice at 839 EDMUND AVENUE.

Sponsors: Bowie

*Deny the appeal.*

*David Jacobowitch, owner, appeared*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Matt Dornfeld: as of June 9, 2022 this was a Category 2 Vacant Building. It remains in the program as a Category 2. The fee is coming due and that's why we're here today. There is a Code Compliance Inspection Report on file but it is my understanding that rehabilitation has stalled and permits may or may not be expired, if there are any.*

*Jacobowitch: we are now entering the fourth year. The City has already assessed Vacant Building fees on this property and I've already paid several. The current \$5,000 fee brings the total since the condemnation to \$17,500. Over that period I've invested \$60,000 into rehabbing. I intend to continue the rehab until it is code compliant. It is hard. It is expensive. I'm not a rich man. I need relief from these Vacant Building fees. I can't afford to both pay those Vacant Building fees and rehab on my income. I'm just completely stuck. Acting in good faith to the best of my financial ability. I'm basically begging the City for mercy. Is there any way I can have these Vacant Building fees not assessed and use all my financial resources to complete the rehab? I have estimates for the remaining work. I have some financial resources. I can afford to pay Vacant Building fees, but I need assistance to get it done and out of the Vacant Building program. Over the past 3 years I've paid the mortgage and taxes on it. I'm being dragged down by these fees. Any compromise on this matter?*

*Moermond: the City charges this annual fee and the conditions haven't changed since the last time we spoke. No building permits pulled or action there. Recalling our previous conversations about out holding onto the property and doing it yourself versus perhaps by someone else. This is your calculation to made.*

*Jacobowitch: I have tried to sell the property. I had an offer for \$150,000 and the person talked to Department of Safety & Inspections and they talked about the Code Compliance report and after that the buyer withdrew his offer. Basically, I'm not sure I can sell this for an amount of money that would allow me to walk away financially even. I'm not going to walk away still owning money on what I've invested in trying to save it. So, I'm stuck. I don't really think the City needs to add another building to its collection of boarded up and derelict buildings. That's the way its headed. I don't want to be financially ruined. I put everything I could into saving this building. The City is charging me \$5,000 a year for nothing. Renovation costs are really high. I don't see a way to get it done.*

*Moermond: when I've talked to people in the past situated like you are—*

*Jacobowitch: I'm sure you have a lot of experience ma'am, I'm aware of your evil reputation.*

*Moermond: no, what I'm trying to say is I REALLY earnestly think you need to do an assessment of the long-term financial choice that's best for you.*

*Jacobowitch: I'd love to walk away if I could do so without owing money.*

*Moermond: the financial calculus you are talking about is breaking even versus mitigating losses. At what point are you better walking now, minimizing damages—*

*Jacobowitch: if it will cause financial ruin why the hell would I want to walk for less than its worth?*

*Moermond: I want you to really consider at what point the taxes and Vacant Building fee are heavier than making a different choice. I can't tell you what to do.*

*Jacobowitch: I'm well aware, but what can the City to do to assist?*

*Moermond: all I can do is refer you to Planning and Economic Development.*

*Jacobowitch: I applied and they said they could approve me but they were concerned I couldn't afford both their rehab loan AND the Vacant Building fee. That's what every commercial lender has told me. That's the cost of servicing a \$50,000 over 15 years, I'd pay approximately \$5,000 on that loan. That's the same as the Vacant Building registration fee. That fee prohibits me from having the financial ability to take a loan. It is just that simple.*

*Moermond: I know, I know. Taking any action on your assessment with the sole purpose of assisting you with rehab is not using the assessment tool correctly. It is saying the whole City subsidized---*

*Jacobowitch: it is more important than people are. That's what you just told me!*

*Moermond: no, I'm saying the balance between what is your responsibility as a private owner versus the rest of the taxpayer's subsidizing your responsibility is the calculus you are asking me to do.*

*Jacobowitch: you're not subsidizing it. I'm not getting a damn thing from the City. For that \$5,000 I'm not getting a damn thing, not one damn thing.*

*Moermond: we've talked about the program in the past and—*

*Jacobowitch: I'm not getting a damn thing from the City for that \$5,000. I've got nothing from the City. I appreciate they've left me alone for year. I've got nothing from them.*

*Moermond: I do know that Vacant Building inspections do occur. Mr. Dornfeld?*

*Jacobowitch: let's keep it specific to 839 Edmund.*

*Dornfeld: 839 Edmund is in the Vacant Building program as a condemned property. These homes generate problems throughout the City that range from tall grass and weeds to snow and ice to illegal dumping to illegal trespass to graffiti to drug sales to prostitution. All sort of criminal activity. We have a staff of 3 people who monitor close to 500 Vacant Buildings. That Vacant Building fee the appellant wants to know about covers all that goes into the City attempting to keep up with the pace of our condemned vacant structures.*

*Jacobowitch: none of that has occurred at 839 Edmund over the past year. I've provided 24/7 security over the last year. No police calls. Shoveled. Mowed. I'm sure Mr. Dornfeld is well aware that is the case.*

*Dornfeld: as we speak there are 8 tires outside your garage and the garage is literally falling over.*

*Jacobowitch: someone dumped them there a couple of days ago. I haven't taken care of them yet.*

*Dornfeld: yeah, a couple days ago---that was 3 weeks ago. That's what we do. Thank you.*

*Jacobowitch: I know exactly what has happened. Maybe the City is the one that dumped them. We get dumping all the time sir, I usually take care of it. You know this damn well—whenever you put up a placard on a property that seems to give people a license to dump. That's happened a lot.*

*Moermond: I have a photo taken May 30 of your garage with clearly broken doors and pile of 7 tires of different sizes. Is that right?*

*Jacobowitch: sure. I suppose I'll pay to get those damn tires removed. I always pay. It is enough to make a guy want to destroy the City government. It isn't within my power but I feel like it sometimes.*

*Moermond: you've talked about that before. We've talked about you looking for rehab money in the past.*

*Jacobowitch: I can get rehab money. \$5,000 is nearly 10% of my income.*

*Moermond: if you could tell me you would be done or likely done within a few months I would definitely waive the fee.*

*Jacobowitch: I have no idea. They tell me the property still needs about \$50,000 worth of work. What the hell am I supposed to do? I have \$20,000 to spend at best. Spend that on the property and then be \$30,000 short? Then we'll be here again next year.*

*Moermond: that's a question for yourself, not me. We've been spinning our wheels—*

*Jacobowitch: I like the wheel spinning. It actually works in my favor.*

*Moermond: well you're getting bills, so maybe not.*

*Jacobowitch: very expensive wheel spinning. I concede that point.*

*Moermond: the registration requirement for a Vacant Building remains the same. This is confirming the conditions haven't changed. If this is unpaid, we'll be talking about a tax assessment for recovering those costs.*

*Jacobowitch: this whole thing is about seizing the building. They want to create a tax assessment so they can seize the building. That's what this has been about from the very beginning.*

*Moermond: I assure you, no one wants to take the property.*

*Jacobowitch: THAT'S A LIE. That's a bold face lie ma'am. \*claps\* You're quite good at it. That's a lie, a bold faced lie.*

*Moermond: ok. I wish you a good rest of your day.*

*Jacobowitch: I expecting nothing from you Marcia and that's exactly what I got. I'll continue to act in my best interest. That's all I can do.*

*Moermond: I encourage you to do so.*

*Jacobowitch: the City gives me nothing but hell. And that's what I wish upon them. Go to hell. You deserve the City you're going to get Marcia and unfortunately you won't get it fast enough. But, I'll dance on your grave nonetheless.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 6/25/2025**

**18**      [RLH VBR 25-20](#)

Appeal of Andy Dawkins and Richard Bowen to a Vacant Building Registration Requirement at 767 UNIVERSITY AVENUE WEST.

**Sponsors:**      Bowie

*Recommendation forthcoming.*

*Rick Bowen, owner, appeared via phone  
Andy Dawkins, owner, appeared via phone*

*Staff update by Supervisor Mitch Imbertson: there was a reinspection made June 6. Significant work completed but not in full compliance yet. Plumbing work appeared completed but there's no permit on record. Exterior branches into electrical—the vine going into the conduit had been removed. They contacted Xcel regarding the tree trimming and seemed to be a misunderstanding about the expectation there and more trimming is needed from pole to house. One additional concern partially addressed was the fire extinguisher was provided but does require annual service. Those were the items from the June deadline. The other items were completed. The larger item is exterior painting which was given to October in the initial appeal.*

*Dawkins: I was there during the inspection. I met with Sebastian and Mitch and they said the tree trimming you were ok with pushing back to the other deadline with the exterior.*

*Imbertson: I said I wouldn't disagree if it was approved through the appeal but I couldn't commit any new deadlines since we were going off the previous appeal*

*Dawkins: Ryan Plumbing said they got the permit and charged me for it. I'm surprised to hear that. They're a licensed plumber.*

*Imbertson: the work would require a permit as far as I'm aware.*

*Dawkins: the fire extinguisher I thought you were going to get an email mitch from Buck extinguisher. You didn't get that?*

*Imbertson: no, if it was caught by spam let me know the day or who but I am not seeing anything.*

*Dawkins: Jamie said he was going to deal with that. If not, we'll get that done.*

*Moermond: I really don't see this building being in use again. I don't know it has been*

for a while. Am I wrong? As I understand it, Mr. Bowen are you even staying in the City?

*Bowen: I will be. I was discharged Friday. I'm still seeing some other doctors and have appointments tomorrow. I'll be back. Andy is still bringing me mail from the office. We've had extensive work done inside. It has been in use; I was just hospitalized.*

*Dawkins: Mitch, tell Marcia how well it looked aside from the outdoor painting.*

*Imbertson: substantial improvement from when we initially saw it. I'm impressed with the amount of work done. I'm not sure as far as whether it will be occupied or not. Similar questions to Ms. Moermond on that.*

*Dawkins: I have a blog site and do some work there. We're going to lower the price and get it sold. Let's just let things go, it isn't out of compliance except for stuff we can wait on.*

*Moermond: we're operating under the decision by Council February 5.*

*Imbertson: the glass was completed. There are exterior window frame work that are part of exterior walls that needs to be cleared.*

*Moermond: can we get an updated list of what should be remaining based on that last inspection?*

*Imbertson: we hadn't generated a new letter since it was already a Vacant Building under appeal.*

*Moermond: that would be fantastic and then I can use that to formulate a recommendation for Council. Sounds like a lot has been abated. Is this in a space where you'd be willing to issue a Fire Certificate of Occupancy with corrections? Or would you maintain the referral to the Vacant Building program, so getting that update would be great. When I get that we'll share it with you gentleman.*

*FOLLOW-UP: Plumbing permit pulled by Ryan 6/12/2025., Rough in approved with corrections, noting dog was loose on property and no entry. No final on permit as of 7/10/25. Recommendation changed from forthcoming to denial. -MM*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 7/16/2025**

## 1:30 p.m. Hearings

### Orders To Vacate - Fire Certificate of Occupancy

- 19     [RLH VO 25-11](#)     Appeal of Connie Baehr to a Fire Inspection Correction Notice (which includes condemnation) at 961 ARCADE STREET.

**Sponsors:**     Yang

*Grant appeal on condemnation and grant extension to November 14, 2025 for compliance with balance of orders.*

*Connie Baehr, owner, appeared*

*Staff update by Mitch Imbertson: I was there on June 6 for a partial reinspection for the appeal. Based on that reinspection I will abate the order for the first-floor ceiling. There is a full ceiling above the suspended ceiling grid. The basement ceiling is separate and needs to be addressed. We talked about minimum compliance. The fire extinguisher installed. Dog license obtained. Regarding the water in the basement: it was clear of water at time of inspection. There is still an ongoing issue with moisture in the basement so we'd view there is still work needed for full compliance to keep it reasonably full of moisture but we would lift the condemnation of the basement since conditions were significantly improved from the first inspection.*

*Moermond: walls in the basement, does that remain?*

*Imbertson: yes, it remains. We had a discussion about expectations on that item.*

*Moermond: number 3, ceiling in basement.*

*Imbertson: yes.*

*Moermond: basement standing water changes from a condemnation to a simple order to address.*

*Imbertson: yes, addressed with items 1 and 4 in the report. Abort condemnation and update notes on the basement moisture.*

*Moermond: foundation elements?*

*Imbertson: that remains however clarifying we're not talking about major foundation work; it is patching as necessary to prevent water infiltration from exterior drainage.*

*Moermond: has that been happening? Evidence of that?*

*Imbertson: I wasn't able to see an exact path of where it comes in, but it appears along the south wall of the building has some drainage issues where it meets the sidewalk that looks to be a culprit.*

*Moermond: annual maintenance of fire extinguishers done. Dog license done.*

*Imbertson: yes.*

*Moermond: repair and maintain floor upstairs?*

*Imbertson: I don't see a location noted, so I took it to mean the whole building. That would just be water damaged areas in basement for 9.*

*Moermond: let's strike 9 and include it in the order we have for basement floor already. Ceiling on sales floor?*

*Imbertson: that is abated based on reinspection.*

*Moermond: a lot is gone. 4 things remaining and that is the basement walls, ceiling, standing water and patching foundation and floors. I think we agreed that was the sum of the problems.*

*Baehr: that was only 1 wall in the basement. I have four contractors that are going to*

come out to give me a bid on fixing that south wall inside and out. They're starting to come out tomorrow. I want to thank you guys. I called immediately on getting a grant and she said wait until you get the bids and I have a lady's name I can possibly get up to \$15,000.

Moermond: I'm glad to hear it is working out.

Baehr: fingers crossed. This has been so positive compared to working with James Thomas.

Moermond: we just need a deadline for the items. I'm not hearing anything is in danger in the building.

Baehr: I drain it immediately, I'm there 11 hours a day. I have a good feeling I'll get it taken care of. I'd like 3 months.

Moermond: I'm going to recommend you have until November 14. I say that because I look at the construction season and that's about the furthest out that it would be reasonable to get that type of work done.

**Referred to the City Council due back on 6/25/2025**

## 2:00 p.m. Hearings

### Fire Certificates of Occupancy

- 20     [RLH FCO 25-35](#)     Appeal of Ronald Staeheli to a Fire Inspection Correction Notice at 358 ARBOR STREET.

**Sponsors:**             Noecker

*Deny the appeal.*

*No one appeared*

*Moermond: when we concluded the hearing last week the question was posed to Mr. Staeheli about whether he wanted to participate in this hearing or provide materials to bolster his case. His choice was to submit additional materials. We received them after 5 pm last night. We have the same driver's license of Ms. Diane Staeheli on Arbor. Also, a significantly delinquent Xcel bill for \$1,800 in gas in her name at that address and a third piece of mail undated from Mutual of Omaha. This is not new information; receiving an Xcel bill doesn't demonstrate she lives there. I need to balance that against the police and fire information that indicate they didn't encounter Ms. Staeheli in the lower unit, rather a family was living there. The O'Brien's. That information is not consistent and I will recommend denial of the appeal.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 6/25/2025**

- 21     [RLH FCO 25-33](#)     Appeal of Rebecca J Monsoor-Cassidy Tr to a Fire Certificate of Occupancy Correction Notice - Complaint Inspection at 944 CROMWELL AVENUE.

**Sponsors:**             Privratsky

*Grant the appeal of the April 23, 2025 Fire C of O orders.*

*No one appeared*

*Supervisor Update by Der Vue: I conducted an inspection May 30, 2025 accompanied by property owner. The inspection conducted there are no Fire or occupancy separation from the main level where she resides to the lower unit. No lockable doors or locking mechanism separating the main level to the lower level. You must access the lower level by going through the main level. The Change of use application has been withdrawn. This is confirmed as a 2-unit dwelling and the owner occupied the main level, so it is owner occupied.*

*Moermond: they never wanted it to be a triplex and withdrew that application and you confirmed in person there is no separations creating a triplex in any way. I'll recommend the Council grant the appeal of the Fire Certificate of Occupancy order. Grant appeal of April 23 orders.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 6/25/2025**