

Dear Council President Lantry, Councilmember Brendmoen and other members of the Council,

I attended a legislative hearing with Ms. Marcia Moermond yesterday regarding my property at 730 Como Ave in St. Paul--it didn't go as I had hoped.

My first appeal hearing to Ms. Moermond, the Legislative Hearing Officer, pertaining to the Fire Certificate of Occupancy inspection was Tuesday, November 15th. During the meeting, I was promised a written summary of the recommendations by Thursday, November 17th, or two days later. Due to the Thanksgiving holiday I allowed additional time, however, when I had not received any communication 13 days later, I called the office on Monday, November 28th to inquire. The Legislative Hearing Coordinator, Ms. Mai Vang, stated a letter had not been sent because it was pending approval by Ms. Moermond. I received a summary email the following Wednesday, November 30th, over two weeks past the specified date.

Upon receipt of the recommendation email, I chose to appeal certain items to the City Council and did so at the December 7th, 2011 public hearing. At the public hearing the council denoted the lack of sufficient information to make a decision and all items on my appeal were stayed until January 2012. Specifically regarding the recommendation of Ms. Moermond to evict residents from an unapproved unit by January 1st, 2012, the council expressed concern for the residents being evicted during cold winter months and in considering the absence of safety concerns, granted me the opportunity to seek formal approval from the Board of Zoning and Appeals. I left the council meeting clear that I was to pursue BZA approval and was told by Ms. Moermond that her office would contact me regarding another legislative hearing for January 3rd, 2012. If there was intention to provide me with meeting minutes or further clarification from the Office of the City Council, it was not fulfilled. Three weeks later, on December 28th, having no word from the City Council's office regarding my next hearing, I emailed the Legislative Hearing Coordinator to confirm my place on the agenda for the January 3rd legislative hearing. Ms. Vang's response indicated she did not have any knowledge I was to attend that hearing and stated she would add me to the agenda. When I arrived at the hearing on January 3rd, having not heard my name during roll call, I was informed I was not on the agenda but would be added. Ms. Vang retrieved my file from the office and when my turn came to sit before the hearing officer both Ms. Moermond and the fire inspector stated they weren't prepared for me.

These facts are pertinent because communication is key. Jim Sinegal, the founder and former CEO of Costco, said, "Good leaders make the determination how to run the [organization] and then communicate to everyone in the [organization] so that they all understand it." Since receiving notification from the City of St. Paul informing me of a fire inspection, I have been uninformed, misinformed, and mistreated by nearly every city employee I've been in contact with (my exception lies with the building permit department and building inspector). The vague words and phrasing in my Fire Inspection Correction Notice, the lack of guidance on the appeal process, the delayed communication from the Legislative Hearing Officer and Coordinator regarding BOTH

legislative hearings, the absence of communication regarding expectations resulting from the City Council public hearing and vague and incorrect information received from the Zoning Department have intensified the considerable challenge I'm already facing to bring this property into compliance.

This is not a problem property. This is not an unsafe place to live. I'm not a landlord with multiple properties attempting to skirt the system or take advantage of anyone. I'm simply a person who owns a house that isn't worth what I paid for it, so rather than foreclose, I maintain it to the best of my knowledge and ability. In my ignorance of these matters I believed since my property is zoned for a three unit building that I was lawful in using it as such. I was fully unaware a variance for lot square footage was required. Now we are here and I'm wondering, "Is it wrong to expect the City of St. Paul work with me in my effort to provide a safe, desirable, and legal place to live?"

Ms. Moermond's recommendation at the January 3rd legislative hearing was for the tenants of the third unit to vacate by February 1st, 2012. Her recommendation was based solely on the fact that my BZA application has not been filed yet. Ms. Moermond's recommendation is based on a condition to an arrangement that was never imparted to me. I've extended her office the courtesy of follow-up and clarification by initiating contact during this process and have not received the same. There is no consideration of holiday season scheduling challenges, my completion of other items from the correction list, or my sworn commitment to pursuing the BZA appeal made evident by my efforts to file only to be turned away and told my application was insufficient. No account for my clean personal reputation, my moral attempts to avoid foreclosure, a property clear of any disturbances to the community or the wonderful people who will not have a place to live on February 1st, the first day of the coldest month of the year. I hope to invoke a sense of reason and compassion among someone who is willing to communicate clearly and candidly with me about the expectations I need to meet and why I need to do so.

I ask that you allow me to file my BZA appeal by the January 16th, 2012 deadline for the February 6th, 2012 hearing. I also ask that you take the opportunity to educate yourself regarding not only the other matters of this property under appeal but also the entire inspections process for the City of St. Paul.

Respectfully,

Juley Viger Speed

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Regards,

Juley Viger Speed

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