

Dear City Councilmember Tolbert

As a resident of your district, and as you are my city Council representative, I respectfully wish to contest the recommendation of assessing a vacant building fee for \$2,285 for 2020-2021 at 1352 Summit Ave.. I'm contesting on the grounds that the project has taken much longer than expected due to the COVID-19 virus and the effects of the civil unrest. It's been very difficult to get things done in a timely manner.

The damage to the building was caused by a fire. There's a provision in legislative code 34 that provides for the fee to be waived for 90 days, then another 90 days. We had every intention of finishing the project within the allotted time, however, the combined effects of the COVID-19, lockdown, civil unrest, and material and personnel shortages has slowed us down considerably. This is far beyond our control.

I fully support the need for this program. I would also ask that the city Council recognize that not everything goes according to plan or how we would like it to proceed. Let me assure you this house, which is my home, is by no means vacant in the sense of being abandoned. There is ongoing work, people are there every day, and it has working utilities. It has been in my family for many decades and is beloved by us.

I would ask that you recognize that we are doing everything humanly possible to be in compliance and to make the home livable. I have lived in Saint Paul all my life. I'm very proud to be a resident of Saint Paul, "the most livable city in America." I have made every effort to be a responsible homeowner and contribute to my community. All I ask that this be taken into consideration. Not every vacant building is the same. And that this fee puts in additional hardship onto already is a very difficult situation.

Whatever you decide, I thank you for your consideration, understanding, and kindness. As I have heard people say over the last several months, as Minnesotans, and Saint Paul residents, we must support one another in this time of crisis. Now more than ever. Even though we may be alone, we are all in this together.

Thank you.

Brent Nelson