



# 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*  
*Joanna Zimny, Executive Assistant*  
*legislativehearings@ci.stpaul.mn.us*  
*651-266-8585*

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Tuesday, February 18, 2025

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 25-27**     Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 355 COOK AVENUE EAST. (File No. VB2505, Assessment No. 258804)

Sponsors:     Kim

*Approve and make payable over 5 years.*

*Greg Adelman, owner, appeared via phone*

*Moermond: sounds like you got your Code Compliance Inspection Report last week.*

*Adelman: yeah, I got it last Thursday.*

*Moermond: I'm guessing you'll be doing the work soon?*

*Adelman: I've been dealing with my heat at my house that went out. I'll be working soon. Clint said you can't pull permits online?*

*Supervisor Hoffman: yeah, hard no. Has to be done in person.*

*Moermond: you're currently 7 months into the billable year and have a fair bit of work to do. I don't think you'll get it done quickly in terms of the fee. Normally I wouldn't prorate a fee if you're in the program more than six months of the year. Then the full fee is owed. Your Council Public Hearing is tomorrow and we're already 7 months in. At the earliest I think you'll be 8 or 9 months into the billable year before you're done. My recommendation in that case is approval of the full fee. I can make it payable over 5 years if that's helpful.*

*Adelman: that would be helpful. I did make notes from our last hearing. Something about a rehab loan?*

*Moermond: you'd have to go online for Planning and Economic Development. I'd start with Neighborhood Development Corporation. If you're done by June you'll have no fee for the next year. If you aren't, you can appeal that. If you want to dispute my recommendation you can email, register to testify by phone if done before noon today,*

*or come in person tomorrow.*

*Adelmann: I don't object.*

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

- 2 RLH TA 25-53** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1540 MINNEHAHA AVENUE EAST. (File No. VB2506, Assessment No. 258805)

**Sponsors:** Johnson

*Recommendation forthcoming on proration of VB fee pending issuance of CC cert with corrections (LHO to talk to Building inspector).*

*Christian Rabadan, owner, appeared via phone*

*Moermond: a couple weeks ago we spoke with Jenny Xiong who asked we call you today. I understand Clint Zane has been through and has a small list of things to finish.*

*Rabadan: yes.*

*Moermond: this has a Council Public Hearing March 19. I'm going to find out if he can issue a Code Compliance certificate with corrections to you so you are officially out of the Vacant Building program. That would give me the ability to prorate this fee. Sounds like it is a small list at this point. Let's get your fee reduced as much as we can. We can't make it go away entirely. This really is about seller disclosure. I don't know where you're at with the conversation I had with Ms. Xiong last time. Do you have any questions or comments?*

*Rabadan: not too much. We are talking to a contractor to finish the flashing. It is cold now, but hopefully he'll get it done in the next week or two. We've been talking to the realtor and seller's agent. Prorating would help even more.*

*Moermond: I'll check the file March 18 and we'll send you an email on the status after talking to Clint. Then you can decide if you want to talk at the Council Public Hearing.*

*Rabadan: I appreciate you trying to help.*

*Moermond: I'll also make it payable over 5 years so in the event you can't resolve with the seller it will be payable over time, not a large sum at once.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 3/19/2025**

- 3 RLH TA 25-97** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1106 ALBEMARLE STREET. (File No. J2510T, Assessment No. 258520)

**Sponsors:** Kim

*Approve the assessment.*

*[Note: assessment was paid by PO 2/19/25]*

*Yee Vue, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: October 3, 2024 orders were written for tall grass and weeds. Compliance date of October 7. Rechecked October 9, work wasn't done. Work was done on October 14, 2024. No returned mail or appeal filed. Total assessment of \$566.50. Quite a history on the property as well as current orders.*

*Vue: here's the deal. My son and daughter live in the house. I am busy and work at Maplewood Toyota. I have a big lawnmower. My son has a smaller one. The tree, the only thing is the tree is growing over the fence. I did my best to cut it down. I'm going to cut all the little trees. My grasses died. I let them grow so I can cut them down. Then I get the notices and the City comes help get it cleared, and then I had a citation for \$566. I am a good citizen, I was surprised. The house next to me and in front of me you can see the grass and trees are a lot taller than mine.*

*Moermond: let's focus on your property. I don't know if there were orders on the other ones. You had orders mailed October 3, and then 14 days later a crew showed up to mow. The assessment isn't for the volunteer trees. It is for the crew mowing the lawn. It looks like 2024 was a bad year in terms of taking care of the property. There were a couple of work orders done and 3 in 2023. That's quite a bit of past problems. Sounds like you need to have a conversation with your son about it.*

*Vue: this country is so hard to teach them. When you grow up you see garbage and you throw it away. These days it is totally different.*

*Moermond: you got a letter about the expectation. You've had enough of them and things haven't changed. Why do you feel you shouldn't have to pay?*

*Vue: I didn't say I don't have to pay. This is my first time, but can you make it easier. 200? 300? Then put a note on it that things thing will never happen again.*

*Moermond: the thing is, I have a history where it has happened a lot. It not happening again is a reward for you not having to pay for another cleanup. I'm going to recommend approval. The City did the work. You got the order. Anything current?*

*Martin: there are current orders the property is continually a mess. Do you have a current address we can mail things too?*

*Vue: could you email it to me?*

*Martin: we can only mail with the system we have.*

*Moermond: you would need to update your information with Ramsey County property taxes.*

*Vue: those American kids aren't that responsible. I didn't get the citation until the last 2 weeks. I shook my head and said this isn't what I want. We want our property value to increase. This is my first time I got a citation like this. It is the first time and the last.*

*Moermond: it is not the first time. It looks like it is 3 cases from 2024 and 3 from 2023. A lot of assessments out there. I'd strongly suggest you figure this out with your children. It is costing you a lot of money.*

Vue: to be honest, I never get them.

Moermond: the homesteader, Lele, did get them. The address for you is the one you gave Ramsey County taxation. Honestly, the homesteader got the notice. I don't know who pays the taxes but if you are you are paying a lot more than you'd otherwise have to. April 12 is the Council Public Hearing if you want to contest my recommendation.

[Note: worksheet originally gave wrong Council Public Hearing date (now corrected), so wrong Council Public Hearing was said in hearing (should have been 4/2). Follow up email sent to appellant with correct date 2/19/25 – JZ]

**Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**

**4 RLH TA 25-83**

Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1826 CHARLES AVENUE. (File No. J2511R, Assessment No. 258519)

Sponsors: Jalali

Layover to LH April 1, 2025 at 9 am. If RC taxation records are updated, delete assessment. If not, reduce assessment from \$389 to \$225. (CPH 4/2)

Nell McClung, owner, appeared via phone

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: Summary Abatement Order was sent September, 17, 2024 to remove and dispose of trash scattered throughout the parking lot. Compliance date of September 24. We did a recheck September 26. Work wasn't done. Work order was done October 7. No mail returned or appeal filed. Total assessment of \$389.

McClung: we have a professional company that oversees the sight. It is 7 acres. Lumberjack does that, and they started the fall cleanup in September and through October. I was literally, during this period, they were working on cleaning it up. I was paying \$1,300 a week for this site's cleanup. We tried to work in conjunction with the apartment buildings there. Unfortunately, their tenants literally dumped everything out of their cars onto our parking lot, which we let them use overnight. We took 3 trailer loads out of there, I'm not saying it wasn't a mess.

Moermond: I don't think I'm going to disagree with that. I am seeing a note that says it was done by the owner and this is a trip charge.

Martin :that's correct, I misread that.

Moermond: you have been maintaining the property and had a cleanup going on, so I'll recommend this is reduced to the \$225 and delete the service charges. It was done, just not on schedule.

McClung: I don't think it was mailed to my office; I would have pushed my contractor there immediately had I gotten it. We're at 1821 University Avenue and have been for 30 years. I don't think we got the initial request.

Moermond: let me check Ramsey County records and see what they have. They also have this it going to that address, and so does your 2025 property tax statement. Give

them a ring and get that changed. I'll look at this file again on April 1 and if it is changed at the County I'll recommend it is deleted entirely.

McClung: I'll take care of it today.

**Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**

**5 RLH TA 25-87** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 836 ENGLEWOOD AVENUE. (File No. J2511R, Assessment No. 258519)

Sponsors: Bowie

Approve and make payable over 4 years.

Christine Young, owner, appeared via phone

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: Summary Abatement Order was issued October 11, 2024 to remove and dispose of a shelf and debris in rear of property. Rechecked October 18th, work wasn't done. Work done October 21. Total assessment of \$440.

Young: when we put the shelf out there I hadn't noticed any mail about it until later on. When we put it out there we put it out for free. When it was gone, I assumed someone took it. I didn't know the City had taken it. We've done that before for free and I guess we've never had a problem until now. When my husband checked he said it was gone since it has the free sign. We didn't realize the City took it. It wasn't broken or anything.

Moermond: three letters went to your house. One to occupant, one to Toua Vang, and one to you. I'm wondering, knowing the City had orders on it, why you didn't take care of it before the deadline?

Young: I pay all my bills online so I don't always look at my mail. We were very busy last year with family problems. The last year, the last month, we haven't been checking mail. We were going through a lot at the time, no one was checking. We paid all our bills online, everything else piled up on the counter. We just assumed someone took it.

Moermond: how long have you owned it?

Young: we bought in 2009.

Moermond: 2021 and 2023, and twice in 2024 you've got orders from the City. Both in 2024 and the one in 2023 ended up in work orders with a crew cleaning it up. I don't know why that wouldn't give you a red flag to look at your mail for things like that.

Young: we only knew about the crew because I walked out and there was a guy with a trailer saying it was just a bucket and a fishing net. He said if I got it done in the next 30 minutes he'd talk with his supervisor. He left after we did it.

Moermond: what about the piece of furniture?

Young: the white shelving unit is the one I was referring to with the free sign.

*Moermond: but you didn't take . The City's requirement is sending via first class notice. We sent 3 letters. I understand you pay your bills online, but most people do that. I think you do owe this assessment. I can make it payable over a number of years, but especially with notices in the past and work done by the City there's a higher level of expectation you'd be watching for this sort of thing. You of course are welcome to talk to the Council and ask for a different outcome. I can make it payable over 4 years.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**

- 6 RLH TA 25-85** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 605 FRONT AVENUE (Vacant Lot). (File No. J2510T, Assessment No. 258520)

**Sponsors:** Kim

*Delete the assessment.*

*Moermond: we have a 1314 assessment that's going to have to be deleted because no notice was sent to the owner. The City did do the work but we're eating the costs.*

*Mai Vang: Inspector Kedrowski said he went through the entire file and said it wasn't sent.*

*Moermond: Mr. Kedrowski noted in an email that the notice was blank for some reason. No notice sent as it should have.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**

- 7 RLH TA 25-84** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 940 GOODRICH AVENUE. (File No. J2511R, Assessment No. 258519)

**Sponsors:** Noecker

*Delete the assessment.*

*Joseph Kasel, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: A Summary Abatement Order was issued October 8 to remove and dispose of doors from rear of property. Work was done by the owner when the crew went out. It wasn't done on recheck on October 15, but it was gone by the time the crew showed October 25. This is a trip charge.*

*Kasel: It was done on the 15th. We put those out there and it was out less than 24 hours. There was a dumpster there the next day. It looks like the exact same picture on recheck. I've lived here 5 years; I have the neatest house on the block. My dumpster didn't arrive on time. This is what I get for updating my house?*

*Moermond: I agree, and I'll recommend this is deleted.*

*Kasel: I appreciate that.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**

- 8      [RLH TA 25-100](#)      Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 2177 LINCOLN AVENUE. (File No. J2506T, Assessment No. 258511) (Refer back to March 4, 2025 Legislative Hearing)
- Sponsors:**      Jalali
- Refer back to LH March 4, 2025 at 9 am. PO to send in videos/photos for review by LHO.*
- Eric Vogstrom, owner, appeared via phone*
- [Moermond gives background of appeals process]*
- Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: June 14, 2024 a Summary Abatement Order was sent to cut and remove all plant growth, vegetation and branches hanging over the sidewalk to a height of 7 feet. The vegetation in the photo was clearly showing it was blocking the public right-of-way. Reinspection June 26 and work was done July 22. Total assessment of \$624. No history at this property.*
- Moermond: went to occupant at that address and Mr. Vogstrom in Excelsior.*
- Vogstrom: my son is a junior at Saint Thomas, he lives at 2022 Laurel Avenue. He went over there and trim it himself. Whoever is claiming they cleared it they didn't. We have photos. We did get the letter, but we have photos proving it.*
- Moermond: can you submit that? you should have got an email from Mai Vang February 10th with photos?*
- Vogstrom: I'd like proof that whoever cleaned it did it. I have video proof of the day of the before and after.*
- Moermond: we're happy to look at this. I see contractor and inspector photos not taken by your son. We'll call you again in 2 weeks after you've submitted it.*
- Vogstrom: June 21 photos, are you looking at that?*
- Moermond: I have a June 14 photo, the next is June 26. First one is when the investigator was out investigating the complaint. June 26 is what he took when he reinspected. The ones with the August 2, the photos were taken June 30th. Sometimes there is that delay. If you have video we're happy to review it.*
- Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025**
- 9      **RLH TA 25-96**      Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1155 REANEY AVENUE. (File No. J2511R, Assessment No. 258519)
- Sponsors:**      Yang
- Continue CPH to September 10, 2025. If no same or similar violations, reduce assessment from \$389 to \$195 and make payable over 5 years, otherwise approve in full and make payable over 5 years.*
- Pauline Plaster, owner, appeared via phone*
- [Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: October 8, 2024 a Summary Abatement Order was issued to remove and dispose of garbage, household items, wood, metal, construction tools and debris from property including driveway and boulevard. by October 15. Rechecked on the 15th. Total assessment of \$389. Extensive history going back many years.

Moermond: so, this is a trip charge.

Plaster: we ordered a dumpster for \$600 for the week and we cleaned out every day and filled that dumpster. I don't understand what the fee is for. My son and his girlfriend are out there; it is mostly his fault. He accumulates a lot of stuff and I try to stay on top of it but I have a problem with my foot. He tries to be kind to everyone and lets them bring stuff over. I keep telling him he can't have people dumping stuff. He's had some struggles the last few years, it has been an ongoing problem.

Martin: I believe your son is scrapping vehicles; it isn't just dumping. We're at the point now where every time we get a complaint you're accumulating Excessive Consumption fees.

Plaster: he let his friend park his white van park there in the extra spot. They did have it in pieces. He just doesn't understand you can't do that. So far I've been lucky to keep it empty back there.

Moermond: sounds like you have an ongoing problem. We're going to send you a Ramsey County house calls brochure.

Plaster: I am a senior and live on \$900 a month, I took my social security early. That's why bills like this are a problem.

Moermond: we'll send that brochure, and we'll also send the number for Public Works garbage hauling program who can inform you about the bulky item pickup.

Plaster: I know I can do 3 bulky items now during the year. We didn't know that until last year.

Moermond: and there will be more with the new changes. Talk to them about that.

Moermond: sounds like your son and his friend have some scrapping issues going on. That's going to cost you a lot of money. Whatever money they're getting from scrapping is costing you much more in assessments.

Plaster: that's because you have to have a license now to turn copper in, and he doesn't have one. So the bit he did make from scrapping he won't be able to anymore. He's done with that, at least I hope so.

Moermond: me too. I don't have a lot of latitude with your assessment here. I'll recommend this is reduced in half and made payable over 5 years if you have no violations through September 1st. You have to keep that yard clean for six months.

Plaster: it appeared to me they were charging me for cleaning the yard up when we'd done it already.

Moermond: it was a trip charge. It was supposed to be done October 15, and when he

came it wasn't done yet. So he sent a crew out, but the stuff was gone before they got there. So they're charging you for the cost of the crew making the trip, since it wasn't done on time.

Plaster: we called for an extension before the 15th and whoever we talked to gave us a week extension.

Moermond: that isn't showing up in my records. Was it you who called Ms. Plaster?

Plaster: yes, I called every hour because I know they're out in the field.

Martin: it was me, and I never talked to her or got a message.

Plaster: then we were talking to the wrong person I guess. I actually came down the year before and talked to him and he worked with me because he knows my son has problems and I was sure that's who we talked to. His girlfriend called and said she got an extension; I don't know who she talked to.

**Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**

- 10 RLH TA 25-101** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 42 ST ALBANS STREET SOUTH, UNIT 1B. (File No. J2511R, Assessment No. 258519)

**Sponsors:** Noecker

Delete the assessment.

No one appeared

Mai Vang: this is a six-unit condo association. The cleanup was done on the grand avenue side. Only one letter was sent and it was only sent to Occupant. Tonya split the bill between the six units.

Moermond: and they'll all have to be deleted because they didn't receive notice.

**Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**

## Special Tax Assessments

### 10:00 a.m. Hearings

- 11 RLH TA 25-90** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1467 ASHLAND AVENUE. (File No. J2511R, Assessment No. 258519)

**Sponsors:** Bowie

Approve the assessment.

No one appeared (no number given).

Moermond: let's send the current owner an email that says the recommendation is for approval. The work was noticed to the previous owner during their period of ownership. The assessment goes with the property. It should have shown as a pending

assessment as of November 4. So not sure what happened with the title company, but she either needs to give us a phone number to discuss further or deal with the previous owner for recompense.

[Note: after follow up email sent, appellant indicated they were working with title company to resolve - JZ]

**Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**

**12 RLH TA 25-89** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 864 CASE AVENUE. (File No. J2512R, Assessment No. 258522)

**Sponsors:** Yang

Delete the assessment.

Joan Foster, owner, appeared via phone

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Foster: this is to do with the wood out there, right? The mattress was gone, it was just the wood.

Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: Summary Abatement Order was issued October 29, 2024 to remove and dispose of a mattress and scrap wood by alley. We did send a work order and it was done. No returned mail, no appeal filed. Total assessment of \$440. I apologize, it was removed by the contractor.

Moermond: so, there wasn't a mattress when the contractor showed, just the wood.

Foster: I would have had it done but my brother passed away so I was in Green Bay for a month helping his wife. I would have moved it into the garage. The dog's knocked down the fence and I had the key with me. I wasn't going to drive back from Green Bay. I've never had you guys out here. The guys who put the new fence up put it there because they couldn't get in the garage because I had the keys.

Moermond: sounds like these are exceptional circumstances that won't happen again. I'll recommend the Council deletes this. I'm sorry for the loss of your brother, take care.

**Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**

**13 RLH TA 25-92** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1319 GALTIER STREET. (File No. J2512R, Assessment No. 258522)

**Sponsors:** Kim

Delete the assessment.

Kimberly Ellis, owner, appeared via phone

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: Summary Abatement Order issued October 9 to remove and dispose of a shelf and tree debris from property by October 16. Wasn't

done on deadline. Work order sent and crew did the work November 1. Total assessment of \$552.50.

*Ellis: it took six months, if I'd gotten a letter six months ago this would have been easier. I don't agree with it. I'm upset. Nothing we can probably do anymore. I removed the twigs. Put them in the backyard. They're still in my backyard. But what am I to do if the guy says he picked them up? I'm looking through the photos, but it took six months to get a bill. I've been here 20 years. I've never had a complaint that I'm aware of. I was ignorant on procedures because I've never have had dumping before. It has been a frustrating summer. I didn't know you could come after me six months. I did have it picked up. I did hire a tree guy. I dumped the rest over the fence since they were small. I'm upset I'm being charged for twigs over the fence.*

*Moermond: I'm seeing one photo with some branches on the outside of a fence that comes up maybe against the side of your house, with a white building behind it. Was that where you moved the branches? Or is it the fence lengthwise running with the street.*

*[photos and aerial reviewed]*

*Moermond: there's three and a half weeks between orders and crew showing up. The furniture was gone by the time the crew went there, or they didn't take a photo. Either way that's a decrease. It isn't clear from the photos it is the same brush we're talking about. The angle of the inspector photo shows a bigger pile of branches, and I don't know who lined them up. The contractor took a photo. Is that the same thing? I don't know. Did the trimmer leave that?*

*Ellis: it was the trees in the alley by the power lines. There were shrubs by that tree that was trimmed.*

*Moermond: yeah, the alley stuff is gone. I agree. I'm thinking there was confusion. You got orders on the scrap furniture and bit of brush, by the alley and a pile by the one tree. You took care of that. At the same time the two large trees outside the fence are in the public right-of-way so I'm thinking forestry may have done some trimming so there are new branches that show up. Then the cleanup crew got there and assumed it was the same thing. I'm going to recommend this deleted.*

*Ellis: Thank you. I really didn't know I'd get charged.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**

**14 RLH TA 25-91**

Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 2002 JAMES AVENUE. (File No. J2506E, Assessment No. 258305)

**Sponsors:** Jost

*Layover to LH March 18, 2025 at 10 am for discussion and review of work plan. PO to submit work plan for approval by COB March 11, 2025.*

*Ryan Weber, occupant, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: a Correction Notice was issued May 11, 2023 to repair the garage/accessory structure and fences, exterior walls and ground cover at the property. Compliance date of June 12, 2023. Rechecked August 6 and August 20,*

2024. Work was not done, so Excessive Consumption bills were sent. The work is still not completed. This is a total assessment of \$303, which is for 2 Excessive Consumption fees. Noting that there were 19 Excessive Consumption bills between June of 2023 and February of 2025, 9 pending Excessive Consumption fees, and they will continue until this is resolved.

Weber: I understand it is taking longer than anticipated. I lost my job and didn't have the funds to complete it, which is why they're not done yet. I did work with the City about permits and trying to save the money to complete the project. When I met with the inspector then I did take care of many of outstanding items. I thought I could store things in the garage while under permit under construction. I've gotten buried under the fees and fines the last 6 months. Obviously the \$2800 in fines will hurt that. I'd like some reprieve. I can't fabricate the funds to finish the project. There are now walls and roof on garage.

Martin: the OSB has been exposed to the elements. Jason Brash has left messages for Ryan and hasn't heard back. The permit was closed due to inactivity. So, we have a partial garage with damaged OSB.

Moermond: and there was an extension on the building permit on August 3, 2023 and that expired when there was no action. There was a framing inspection April 2024 and the permit was closed December 13 2024 after inspector was unable to reach Mr. Weber. He tried for 90 days prior to closing the file.

Weber: I don't know where he was calling because I never got any calls. The inspector changed from Brash to James Bond last April. I was explaining to him about my unemployment and at that time I thought we were under and understanding. To hear he called me many times; I never received any calls or Voicemails from the inspector.

Moermond: it does look like he has the same number as we called today.

Martin: says December 11 we reached out to Ms. Klemme in Minneapolis because it doesn't have a Certificate of Occupancy.

Weber: the application for the Fire Certificate of Occupancy was submitted. I've been working with them.

Moermond: that doesn't show up yet, was that recent?

Weber: in the last couple of weeks. I mailed it in. I sent it to Frank—I can find his name here—I also emailed him a digital copy.

Moermond: it may just be some delay if it was just sent in. I am struggling here. The work wasn't completed, the permit was extended and then later closed. It sounds like you need to pull a new permit and unfortunately this is what we're stuck with on the property. I'm trying to see my way through. The inspector goes out, the work wasn't done. This bill is August 6 and August 20. When do you think you'll have this done?

Weber: if I have to pay \$2,800 in fees now I'll be back to zero and starting over on saving up for the project. If I could get these fees waived I have the funds to get the garage going. That just happened in the last 30 days. I could order materials tomorrow if I can get the fees waived. I haven't done so because I was waiting to see how this went with you all first. I was waiting to move forward with the garage until I figured out this piece. They took my couch and the tire I'd just bought and removed it from my

garage.

*Moermond: I don't have that in front of me today. What I have is a bill for 2 inspections, one for August 6 and one for August 20th. I can see it is part of a very large amount of Excessive Consumption fees already with more coming forward. I can't waive anything that's already passed. What I can do is say we can make this payable over time or get a work plan in place to get an end game on this.*

*I'll continue this for 2 weeks for you to put together a work plan to move forward so you hopefully aren't looking at these fees.*

*Weber: as you can imagine at 17 below I'd love to be able to park in my garage. Anything we can do to help the lack of finances is appreciated.*

*Moermond: let's talk March 18th. Let's have the plan in March 11th.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 3/19/2025**

**15 RLH TA 25-95**

Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 327 MAPLE STREET. (File No. J2506E, Assessment No. 258305)

Sponsors: Johnson

*Approve the assessment.*

*Ray Krueger, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: July 24, 2024 a Summary Abatement Order was issued to owner regarding removal and disposal of buckets, wood debris & miscellaneous items from front porch & property. Compliance date of July 31. These were issued by Inspector Munos. It wasn't done, compliance recheck dates of July 31, and August 1, and August 8. Work wasn't done so two Excessive Consumptions sent. August 1 and August 8 there was a Vehicle Abatement Order also. Some Excessive Consumptions sent on that.*

*Kreuger: the vehicle on the side of the house that's parked on a private drive and was tarped up. That one? Or are you talking about the one that was used to scare a widowed woman out of her car for \$100 because she couldn't afford a battery? Also parked on private land. Which one was it?*

*Martin: let me finish my report. July 24, 2024 a Vehicle Abatement Order was issued for a silver Honda. Appears inoperable, lacks current tabs--*

*Kreuger: appears inoperable? That is my car that works. Yes.*

*Moermond: Mr. Kreuger, give her a moment to let her finish please.*

*Martin: vehicle was surrounded by tall grass and weeds. There was a tire leaning up against it. Those are the Excessive Consumption fines. Photos attached to file. Total assessment of \$571.*

*Moermond: when did these inspections occur?*

*Martin: August 1 and August 8.*

*Moermond: no third one? Ok.*

*Krueger: why it is illegal to have a car on private land? We have a neighbor with a car parked in the driveway that hasn't moved in 40 years. It was there when I was in elementary school. There's selective enforcement put upon us.*

*Moermond: I believe you appealed the Vehicle Abatement Order. That was resolved. I can't re-litigate that with you now.*

*Krueger: you're charging me \$500 for something you say is resolved. I'm baffled.*

*Moermond: the appeal you filed was resolved. We're looking at the Council's decision as the basis for their enforcement.*

*Krueger: not illegal to change a tire on your care the last time I checked. It is on private land. What is the legal basis for that? I know we can't face our accusers because you guys have quietly written a rule that says you can't face your accusers even though the 14th amendment says that you can. That's national. State law. Probably City level. What's the basis for taxing us like this and putting the extra charge upon us?*

*Moermond: we're engaged in that conversation now so I'm a little confused—*

*Krueger: well, I'm a little confused too.*

*Moermond: --about how you're saying you don't have a voice when you do now and if you aren't satisfied with the way this turns out you can go to the Council and certainly, all of the Councils decisions including the one in October, can be appealed also. There are paths forward for you. The Council's decision was to grant an extension to October 11, 2024 for compliance with the Summary Abatement Order and Vehicle Abatement Order and item 1 in the Correction Notice and grant to October 1, 2025 for balance of the correction notice . These inspections are for last August, which is \*preceding\* to when you filed the appeal.*

*Krueger: is this a variety of harassment? I don't quite understand what the basis is. You just coming through and tacking on extra money to pull in some extra money from the City? What is the actual problem? We've trimmed the grass. Cleaned the area. The tires back on the car and has been for some time. We got a new battery. The widow ended up selling her car for scrap rather than deal with you guys coming down on her while she was losing everything. I'm just curious as to why. What motivated this? Who is our accuser? Where is this all coming from, ultimately? I can understand grass that tall, I got rid of my gardens on the boulevard—you harassed us back then too.*

*Moermond: sir, here's the thing—*

*Krueger: I'm just asking questions.*

*Moermond: and I'm trying to answer them. This is an assessment for two bills from before the appeal was filed. They went out in August for noncompliance with the orders.*

*Krueger: we did comply with the orders.*

*Moermond: you filed an appeal on August 23, so that was two weeks after these bills went out. I understand you've worked on the problems since then, but this is for inspection services \*prior\* to your appeal. They want to bill you for the inspectors having gone out and the work not being done.*

*Krueger: I understand, just send the people out several times to accumulate a high bill. It isn't like people around here haven't been through this before. This is something you do every couple of years. You send out a bunch of little assessors. You claim there's a complaint but you can't say who the complaint comes from even though the 14th amendment says I can face my accusers. I'm just curious on what basis you can charge us.*

*Moermond: if a complaint comes in and—no, the City can't disclose who exactly complains, that goes against State law—the inspector goes out—*

*Krueger: does State law supersede Federal?*

*Moermond: the inspector goes out and makes a finding about whether a condition exists that is in violation of the Code. At that point, the inspector has made a finding and writes orders.*

*Krueger: and then writes extra things on too.*

*Moermond: sir, I'm looking at these two inspections from August based on orders that—*

*Krueger: I'm on my computer looking at them too.*

*Moermond: you could have appealed.*

*Krueger: so, we need to appeal?*

*Moermond: you could have appealed the order that this is based on. You did not. You appealed a later order.*

*Krueger: ok, how do I do that? Since you have a secret policy that you don't advertise it to anyone.*

*Moermond: how is it secret if you filed an appeal previously?*

*Krueger: I'll just go through the motions. Don't get flustered and talk over me, please. Allow me the opportunity to state my piece. Really. I know you're trying to collect extra money for the City and stuff, that's your deal. These problems have been taken care of. Many weren't problems in the first place. We're not allowed to park a vehicle on our own private land, which is paved. Why is it that we're selectively being enforced upon when no one in this general area seems to be? Going after our gardens. Guy a block and a half away got paid \$1,500 from the Soil & Water Board to put up the exact same thing I had in my yard at the time. So, I'm really just baffled why this is coming up. Ever. Really. I haven't heard a single explanation beyond we can magically say someone complained. I think you just drive up the street and say someone complained. Are we on someone's black list? What is going on.*

*Moermond: I've answered—*

*Krueger: I'm curious as to why these rules apply to us directly and yet no one else. That sounds like selective enforcement.*

*Moermond: we have already handled that in your appeal you filed—*

*Krueger: you have?*

*Moermond: after the time period for which these bills were written.*

*Krueger: so, we're being charged money because we didn't file a letter to you guys?*

*Moermond: sir, I've explained what the charge is for and I don't know what I can tell you beyond that that would satisfy your interests.*

*Krueger: well, we're also being told we can't approach our elected representative too while you were coming down and harassing us. I'm really just—I haven't heard an explanation for any of it. What I heard was "oh, we got a magical phone call and decided to have multiple times showing up until we get money."*

*Moermond: I appreciate your perspective, sir, I think that you have a lot of accusations about how things work and you are welcome to share them with the City Council.*

*Krueger: I can tell the City Council isn't particularly interested. I'm asking what YOUR basis for it is—why did our property rights get negated?*

*Moermond: sir, I shared that twice already, at least.*

*Krueger: no, you said there's a letter and that you sent one of your guys out to size us up. And when he couldn't get us one way, he got us another.*

*Moermond: I'm not going to argue with you anymore.*

*Krueger: that is amazing. I'm not arguing.*

*Moermond: I'm going to recommend approval of your assessment. We are done with our conversation. If you want to go to the City Council—*

*Krueger: ok, so basically your whole deal was just to—*

*[call is ended]*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 3/19/2025**

**16 RLH TA 25-82**

Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1114 MARGARET STREET. (File No. J2511T, Assessment No. 258523)

**Sponsors:** Johnson

*Layover to February 20, 2025 at 10 am.*

*Voicemail left at 12:18 pm: This is Marcia Moermond from St. Paul City Council calling you about your appealed assessment for 1114 Margaret Street. I'm going to try and reach you Thursday morning between 10 and 12 and hopefully we can talk then. I know its past the original hearing time.*

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 2/20/2025**

- 17 **RLH TA 25-93** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 304 RYAN AVENUE. (File No. J2510T, Assessment No. 258520)

Sponsors: Noecker

*Delete the assessment.*

*Martin: the tall grass and weeds letter was never sent due to computer error.*

*Moermond: so, assessment is deleted.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**

- 18 **RLH TA 25-94** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 304 RYAN AVENUE. (File No. J2512R, Assessment No. 258522)

Sponsors: Noecker

*Approve the assessment.*

*Daniel Bennett, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: October 17, 2024 a Summary Abatement Order was issued to dispose and remove wood debris and any other miscellaneous debris from vacant lot. Compliance date of October 23, 2024. Rechecked October 23. Work was done by the crew on October 30. Mail sent to previous owner, Michael Zaslavsky. Current owners purchased November 22, 2024.*

*Bennett: we own 302 Ryan and are next to 304 Ryan. We purchased the lot and it was caught up in the builder going bankrupt who built 300, 302 and 304. We'd been staring at the grass and trash for a long time. In fact, most of the stuff was from building our house. The orders went to the Zaslavskys who were forced a foreclosure on the lot to get ownership of the lot. They had some kind of lien against owner as part of their build. They wanted to cash out of the lot. We mainly bought it because while we may build in the future we're interested in keeping it clean or clear and previously had no intention paid to it. Maybe we can meet halfway and use that money to keep the lot from getting more assessments now we have control.*

*Moermond: the problem is the City did spend the money for the contractor did do the work. The notice did go to owner during ownership, and it should have been disclosed. If it didn't it is a complaint with them not the City.*

*Bennett: yes.*

*Moermond: I'm going to have to recommend approval of the assessment.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**

- 19 [RLH TA 25-88](#) Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 125 WINTER STREET. (File No. J2512R, Assessment No. 258522)

Sponsors: Bowie

*Rescheduled to LH 2/20 at 10 am.*

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 2/20/2025**

### **Special Tax Assessments-Rolls**

- 20 RLH AR 25-19** Ratifying the assessment for Rubbish and Garbage Clean Up services during October 7 to 23, 2024. (File No. J2511R Assessment No. 258519)
- Sponsors:** Jalali
- Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**
- 21 RLH AR 25-20** Ratifying the assessment for Tall Grass and Weed Removal services during October 14 to 22, 2024. (File No. J2510T Assessment No. 258520)
- Sponsors:** Jalali
- Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**
- 22 RLH AR 25-21** Ratifying the assessment for Rubbish and Garbage Clean Up services during October 28 to November 8, 2024. (File No. J2512R Assessment No. 258522)
- Sponsors:** Jalali
- Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**
- 23 RLH AR 25-22** Ratifying the assessment for Tall Grass and Weed Removal services during October 24 to November 6, 2024. (File No. J2511T Assessment No. 258523)
- Sponsors:** Jalali
- Referred to the City Council due back on 4/2/2025**

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

#### **Vacant Building Registrations**

- 24 [RLH VBR 25-4](#)** Appeal of Ozzy Zachran, O.I.G. Holdings, to a Vacant Building Registration Notice at 383 TORONTO STREET.
- Sponsors:** Noecker
- Layover to February 25, 2025 at 1 pm for further discussion after Fire Inspector visit 2/21.*
- Ozzy Zachran, OIG Holdings, appeared via phone*

Moermond: sounds like you just called for an inspection February 6 and its scheduled February 21, is that right?

Zachran: yes 10 am 2/21. We were almost done. It was out of control when the sheriff could serve the writ. When we last spoke we anticipated the sheriff would move quicker. It took 2 weeks to get them out. We waited to call until we could get back into the property.

Moermond: you weren't getting rent for a while, right?

Zachran: not since July 2024, no.

Moermond: so, you could have filed for eviction earlier.

Zachran: there was a moratorium for evictions on any Evergreen properties.

Moermond: layover one week.

Zachran: that's fine, it is done.

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 2/25/2025**

**25 RLH VBR 25-7**

Appeal of Pastor Roger Barcus to a Vacant Building Registration Notice at 677 CALIFORNIA AVENUE EAST.

Sponsors: Kim

Waive VB fee for 90 days (to May 1, 2025) and allow permits to be pulled. If Fire C of O is reinstated prior to May 1, grant appeal and release from VB program.

Roger Barcus, owner, appeared via phone

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor Der Vue: single-family home. On January 23, 2025 a complaint was received that included a possibly non-owner-occupied property with no Fire Certificate of Occupancy. A Pipe burst resulting in flooding. An inspection was done January 24 and the property was condemned due to the burst pipe which led to a water shut off and extensive water damage. Lack of smoke and carbons. Unsanitary conditions throughout including visible mold in basement. Did confirm it was non-owner occupied. It was condemned for immediate vacate and sent to Vacant Building January 24, 2025.

Moermond: in the orders there are several things that refer to the water damage and would any arise to a structural concern? Looks like a lot of ceiling damage from the photos.

Vue: water is a building's worst enemy and based on the photos we are noting damage through the windows, ceilings, and I can't imagine this was just from this one pipe bursting. It may have been there prior to the inspection by our office.

Staff report by Supervisor Matt Dornfeld: we opened a Category 2 Vacant Building January 24, 2025 per that referral from Fire Inspections. We documented the house appeared to be vacant and secure at the time of the inspection.

*Barcus: the supposed pipe burst we found out was not that at all but a slow leak in the dishwasher. That's the only problem in the house. Obviously those living there didn't bother shutting it off or noticing it for a long time. We all know the dishwasher doesn't stay on that long and the valves inside don't let water continue to run unless it's on. The people living there let this happen over a long period without telling us. I agree that because of water there is damage in the house. The dishwasher has been removed and will be replaced with a new one. We have to replace all the carpeting. Water is on in the house because there's no longer a leak. The mold can be cleaned.*

*We bought the house 16 years ago for our daughter. She lived there for years. Then she moved to Korea during which time we rented the house out. You are absolutely right we didn't have it inspected nor approved for rental. I admit that. Our plan now is to replace the carpet and fix the walls and ceiling and sell the house. It won't be rented again. My daughter won't be moving in there again unless its required.*

*Moermond: we have bad interior conditions, water damage because of a dishwasher you say?*

*Vue: based on the photos and conversation with inspector who did the inspection the damage to the flooring and walls and windows isn't just in the kitchen where the dishwasher was*

*Barcus: it ruined the carpet and the two bedrooms in the basement. All of that area was damaged. It went for a long time without saying anything.*

*Vue: I see a window frame and sash that have a lot of water. Is this window near the kitchen, or below it?*

*Barcus: let me look at the photos. If a window needs to be replaced, we will do that. That is a 10-foot board on top of the foundation. It goes all the way around the perimeter of the lower level. Yes, it was wet. But it is dry now. It wasn't rotten, it was just wet. I do see several places of damage in the ceiling. I see one spot in a bedroom that does have some dark color to it, appears to be mold.*

*Moermond: I see a lot of mold all around. I see a fair bit between ceiling and walls. All makes me concerns the mold issues exist between the walls and on the framing.*

*Barcus: we're certainly willing to do that. Replace drywall and treat boards as needed. They were in there 15 months.*

*Vue: since we see visible mold, we'd be concerned about what is inside the walls with any sort of water damage or flooding. Typically, a building permit will be required. We don't know what was affected with insulation.*

*Barcus: the house looks different now it is dried out. Some drywall needs to be replaced and the framing addressed. Insulation as well if needed.*

*Moermond: sounds like you want to get the repairs done. I'm assuming you'd prefer not to be in the Vacant Building program?*

*Barcus: yes.*

*Moermond: I think we all want to see the house cleaned up. I'm ok with waiving the fee for a limited period. If you can get your signoffs from Fire inspections before that time*

*elapses, there would be no Vacant Building fee. 90 days, if your Certificate of Occupancy is reinstated by May 1, then you're out of the Vacant Building program.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 3/5/2025**

**26 RLH VBR 25-9** Appeal of Abah Mohamed to a Vacant Building Registration Requirement and Notice of Condemnation and Order to Vacate at 576 LEXINGTON PARKWAY NORTH.

**Sponsors:** Bowie

*Grant appeal and release property from VB program and grant to April 18, 2025 for compliance.*

*Abah Mohamed, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Der Vue: this is a 2-unit dwelling.*

*Mohamed: it is not.*

*Vue: when scheduling the Fire Certificate of Occupancy inspection, the inspector was notified it was owner occupied. During review notification was received that water was shut off since 2023. The property was condemned for lack of basically utilities and sent to the Vacant Building program January 24, 2025.*

*Staff report by Supervisor Matt Dornfeld: this was appealed back in August 2024. September 10, 2024 we closed the Vacant Building file as electric was restored. As of January 14, 2025 we opened a Category 2 Vacant Building per that referral. As of January 20th, Inspector Hesse documented the house appeared vacant and secure.*

*Mohamed: I don't know what that means but ok.*

*Moermond: it means the Vacant Building inspector went by and thought it didn't look like anyone was living there. Tell me why you're appealing today.*

*Mohamed: as you're aware when I appealed last year, the Fire Supervisor was aware of my situation. It was never vacant. It still isn't vacant. When he came in last year he told me my son couldn't stay. I've been working to make it a multifamily home. When I first applied for the Fire Certificate of Occupancy I was told either apply for homestead or do that. I didn't understand the differences. I applied with the wrong one. My son doesn't pay me rent, and he is a family member and he lives there because I couldn't leave it vacant. That was the previous situation where when I was talking to the fire inspector he didn't educate me or answer my questions. I didn't learn much about it. Later, I went to the City and they explained to me that if my son is living there I shouldn't be applying for the Fire Certificate, so that's when I made it homestead.*

*Supervisor Vue stated I claimed I lived there. I never claimed I lived there. That's untrue. If there is evidence of me living there I'd like to see it. It is the same son that lived there before. I have filed with the County. You have verified the electric was on. That has been solved.*

*Moermond: agreed.*

*Mohamed: now it says it is off. I'd like to see proof of that. I've never had that happen. Back to water. It has not been interrupted. It is news to me about that. I called them. I'm working on funding with the City/County/Met Council. I called different folks, including the City, and because we were thinking we would start construction I notified the water company there was going to be a big construction project and I needed to turn the water off. Then right away I called because that day the funding didn't go through. They never shut off service. I have called to check and see what was going on, because there was never an interruption in water. She said I need to speak to the meter people; they need to fix something. She transferred to me and I explained we haven't had any issues. If they have evidence the water is off, I'd like to see that. Last year the inspector came in and I got those corrections, he went everywhere and was aware the water was on. I received a letter again that gave me several corrections with a deadline of the 20th. In the meantime, I received another letter saying it is a Vacant Building and then the condemnation. It is very confusing and unfair. Lots of contradiction. That's why I'm appealing.*

*One more thing, going back to the background of the property. I've been applying for rezoning and talking to the City Councilmember Bowie. We were recently awarded brownfield funding recently. They've been to the property and making sure there's no contamination. We also were awarded funding from the State. We have now applied to Met Council for funding through the City and hope we are able to get that. That was just submitted. That is also all ongoing while these other unnecessary things are happening. There aren't any fire code issues in the property. There was one smoke detector missing in the basement I was told to fix. No major fire issues. Because I didn't receive enough information last year it was confusing. The Vacant Building inspector didn't know why suddenly a Category 2. The Fire Inspector wasn't answering questions and was shutting me down to help me comply. I requested to speak to his Supervisor to get an extension and that was approved back then for five months. I'm requesting kindly to have an extension while we work on funding. I want to appreciate everyone's time and just to make this short, a few items I hope to see is to correct the mistakes coming from your side like saying there is no water, which is untrue. Electric shut off; I really want to see. The other thing is if there is any way to have a different inspector assigned, at this point I believe this is personal. I have respectfully told the inspector I felt he was not helpful. I also have respectfully told him I wasn't expecting a call because I felt filing the right document with the County for a relative homestead, I thought that would be the correct document. He didn't educate me or have information on that.*

*Last, I spoke with Mai. Are you guys there or did I lose you?*

*Moermond: we're here listening.*

*Mohamed: I am talking to much thanks for the time. I spoke with Mai in the appeal department and she said there was a couple of times the inspector visited and there was nobody. He had no appointment. All I did was receive a letter saying there was no electric and no water, and that isn't true.*

*Moermond: you can have a relative homestead the property, but as far as Fire inspection under City code operates it says whether an owner-occupant lives there or not. I think what happened was when you filed for homestead status because your son was there, perhaps you were under the impression you wouldn't be in the fire inspection program anymore, and maybe they heard you thought that because it was homestead. I don't know, but that's the crux of this.*

we do have confirmation the electric is on at the property, that was a computer problem it regenerated onto the orders. With respect to the water, you said to them the water was working and they said they wanted to replace the meter. I think that may resolve the problem. I just messaged Water and the head of customer service says your meter shows no service since November 6, 2023.

You called them SWRS January 15 saying you do have water. They asked to get in to change the mater because it looks like you aren't consuming any. You've got two years' worth of water for free I assume. I'd love if you committed to doing that. Will you?

Mohamed: what am I committing to do?

Moermond: get your water meter fixed because it isn't registering any water at all with the water department. Please get it fixed.

Mohamed: ok. But one more thing I want to say is I did call and they said talk to the meter people and I DID talk to the meter people, twice. I don't know what is happening. Do I have to call again?

Moermond: I would say so.

Mohamed: I will do that today.

Moermond: great. I think that's where the problem comes from in terms of the inspector saying there is no water usage. If your meter wasn't registering usage because its broken, that's what the inspector is going to think. I don't sense any malice in that at all, just simply a broken meter that can be fixed. I'm glad to hear your fixing things up. The two items that led to the condemnation were the basic facilities, water and electric, and those appear to all be ok. You said you'll be getting the meter addressed. That's what you need to do. The remaining orders can be converted to regular correction orders. They don't look to be difficult to get done. The condemnation is gone. The Vacant Building registration is gone. We'll convert the balance of the orders to Correction Orders and you need to schedule an appointment for Fire Certificate of Occupancy with Supervisor Vue. She will be taking the file. Let's go to April 18 for compliance.

Mohamed: is it possible to get that information in an email?

Vue: yes, I'll send it.

**Referred to the City Council due back on 3/5/2025**

## 1:30 p.m. Hearings

### Orders To Vacate - Fire Certificate of Occupancy

- 27     **RLH VO 25-4**     Appeal of Glen Rank, on behalf of Millenium, to a Fire Certificate of Occupancy Revocation and Order to Vacate at 1596 HEWITT AVENUE.

Sponsors:     Jalali

Grant to June 1, 2025 for compliance by 1) change in use established by permit application and approval with code analysis; or 2) change in the CUP or new CUP

*allowing continuing use as a rooming house.*

*Glen Rank, property manager, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Der Vue: 8-unit residential property with the approved use of a sorority for Hamline University. The Certificate of Occupancy was revoked for change in use. There were repairs for the exterior stairs required, signed off by building inspector this past December. There was an appeal filed last January, with extension to July 1 with 2 options: by 1) change in use established by permit application and approval with code analysis; or 2) change in the CUP or new CUP allowing continuing use as a rooming house*

*Referral was sent to plan review. As of October 2024, no CUP or amendment was received. Multiple attempts to reach Responsible Party, Millennium management, went with no response.*

*Rank: we're trying to work with MASH (Minnesota Association of Sober Homes) to get this into a sober living facility. That should be done by June or July. Then we'd be requesting a different type of license. I think this is a gendered based issue because I believe only females are supposed to live in the property.*

*Moermond: I have a resolution from February 2024 and that gave to July 1, 2024 to straighten out the zoning stuff and there's been no effort. Why would the next six months look any different than the last year?*

*Rank: I believe ownership thought the staircase was the biggest problem. They spent a lot of energy to get that taken care of. I guess that's why we're where we are today.*

*Moermond: the resolution in front of Council back in February gave to July 1, 2024 for compliance by 1) change in use established by permit application and approval with code analysis; or 2) change in the CUP or new CUP allowing continuing use as a rooming house. The things the Council was addressing weren't the stairs, though there were orders on the stairs. You asked and thought it was women only? The condition of the permit to use as a rooming house had a handful of expectations, and limited residency to 8 women students who are members of a single recognized Hamline sorority. That was what allowed it as a rooming house in 1987 and my understanding is the sorority went bankrupt but it was purchased and then a congregate living situation was reestablished but the CUP terms were no longer being met. That's why I was hoping it would have been addressed by now.*

*Rank: my background is formally a director and counselor of rehabilitative services for the Salvation Army. Currently volunteer teaching there. I know it well. I petitioned ownership to look for a place that may work with that and this appeared to be a perfect place because it was a quiet neighborhood. I made a request of our ownership to research and move that direction and that's the major reason we're doing that. I talked to Der, we also have a different property we work together on in St. Paul and she suggested while we were working on this I should appeal so we could work though this.*

*Moermond: there was an end game for dealing with this, which would have resolved this already. We're looking at a new end-game and you want to turn it into sober housing, which I assume you are familiar with?*

*Rank: I have in Minneapolis, but not yet in St. Paul. I have limited knowledge but working with MASH to make sure we have what we need. June is ideal. I think I can get everything in place by June.*

*Moermond: you need to be all over that CUP and get it going. Ms. Vue, are you aware of any requirements about occupying this as sober housing and needing those approvals before occupancy? Certainly, the CUP needs to be approved.*

*Vue: a request for reasonable accommodation form would be submitted. There's info on the website that starts with our zoning division.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 3/5/2025**

## 2:00 p.m. Hearings

### Fire Certificates of Occupancy

- 28 [RLH FCO 25-8](#) Appeal of Navid Amini to a Fire Certificate of Occupancy Correction Notice at 342 KELLOGG BOULEVARD WEST.

**Sponsors:** Bowie

*Layover to LH March 4, 2025 at 2 pm.*

*Navid Amini, business owner/tenant, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Der Vue: this is a mixed unit property with one residential unit and a commercial space. The primary occupancy is mercantile sales. Fire Safety received a complaint January 14, 2025 about a possible change in use. Inspection was done January 16, resulting in correction orders due to evidence of beverages, coffee and other snacks served. The orders note possible licensing required and that the commercial space was occupied as a bar/restaurant without prior approval.*

*Moermond: the orders themselves talk about the building code, basically saying it isn't necessarily a mercantile, it could be something else. You're talking to Zoning about the use of the property. I'm wondering if you talked to licensing if that's the question? Zoning is making a decision about the building code?*

*Vue: Zoning is trying to determine the appropriate use of the current use of the space. We spoke to the Licensing manager and at this time unless there is use of alcohol. Technically from their end there is no business license needed for this type of business unless they serve alcohol. His only comment was they would need a State issued license for any restaurant and possibly Dept of Ag for any food handling licenses.*

*Moermond: for Fire Inspection purposes you need to have a clear determination about what the use is so you know you're following the right rules for inspecting it. Different rules for mercantile use than there would be for restaurant use than there would be for a resident. You need a clear answer.*

*Vue: correct.*

*Amini: we were first notified about this through Housing Hub where we rent our little store front. I was very confused because as a first-time business owner there are a lot of hurdles to jump through. I pride myself on being diligent, I was with the St. Paul Police Department reserve unit for many years and now I'm a retired County coroner for Mayo clinic. I'm someone who follows the rules. The whole genesis of why I'm doing what I'm doing is I've handled thousands of deaths related to alcohol and drugs and fentanyl and I wanted to create a safe space for the sober community to congregate. For healers to connect with one another. Have some coffee, I have like Costco packaged snacks. Pretzels and Cheetos, things like that. No food is made on site. We don't handle that. It is a little café, no alcohol. That's the whole point of this, to be a safe space to meet without the pressures of alcohol. We're not a bar or restaurant. We're again very intentionally NOT serving products that have contributed to mortality.*

*When I first received word of this notice our building owner called and I said I have no idea. We worked with the Department of Health for months. They went through our menu and did our inspection and gave us the green light. We gave as much info as needed so I'm not really sure how this all occurred. I know it was previously occupied by Susan Brown who made chocolates and had bees on the roof. She was there 13 years. We're way less involved than she was. She also had coffee on site in a little café. When we took it over we spoke to the Department of Health and they said you may just be owner to owner, it is basically the same business concept though you're not making chocolate products. You're less involved. Then when I got this letter I called around Zoning and then Fire and then building use and someone said "you're so small in that space and given the nature of what you're doing I think you might actually be ok with the existing mercantile. That may be the only thing I can see, where they want you to have a different type but certainly not a bar or restaurant. Maybe retail, which covers cafes and bakeries but you aren't creating anything onsite." It was just so many weeks of calls trying to figure this out. I'm pretty calm about things but my business partner is having bad anxiety over it. I told her I'd take care of it. We've created a beautiful little space for people and hopefully this is just a misunderstanding because we are certainly by no means a bar or restaurant. No Delta 9 products. No alcohol. Nothing. I was just appealing to the fact we're not that. I invite anyone come in on our busiest day and you can see it is very straightforward little operation with no food handling on site. Department of Health was initially urging us to just look at maybe getting a retail thing since we aren't making anything on site. We've created such a great little community, all the art is from local artists and profits go right back to the artists, I don't keep a cent. Trying to create a safe space for people to connect. There's some coffee and snacks but they really come for the vibe and tranquility.*

*Moermond: it sounds wonderful. I'd like to put this whole thing on ice for a couple of weeks. Ms. Vue hasn't heard back from Zoning and I would like to have a bit more from them on their thoughts because this whole thing could just go away based on a Zoning review of it. If that happens, all the better. As long as its under appeal everything is stayed. No enforcement. Your girlfriend can relax and we'll be in stasis for a bit longer. I would love if Zoning can resolve that. We'll have better information for you in a couple of weeks.*

*Amini: that sounds great. We're grateful for your support and the opportunity to appeal. When I came into appeal people were very excited to stop by and check it out after I showed them videos. I hope this can be resolved and can continue providing this for the people of St. Paul.*

*I have to share; I was a little surprised at the administrative burden of creating something small like this. I've talked to a few friends who said Minneapolis isn't*

*anywhere near this complicated. For a City that really wants to make things easy there is quite a few hoops to jump through.*

*Moermond: you don't have to be candid I think that's a known thing they're trying to figure out how to improve. Like everything it doesn't happen instantly. But what you are saying isn't news to me. My apologies—*

*Amini: I don't want to be offensive.*

*Moermond: you are not, in fact that's the feedback we need to make changes to the system. We can say we've heard from people who own businesses. That makes all the difference. I really do appreciate that feedback and I know the Councilmember representing the area will appreciate the same exact kind of information. That helps us do a better job. Thank you for being candid. Hopefully the bureaucracy gets to be really slimmed down, I hear you.*

*Amini: I appreciate that. Thank you for hearing me out.*

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 3/4/2025**