



City of Saint Paul

City Hall and Court House
15 West Kellogg Boulevard
Phone: 651-266-8560

Staff Report

File Number: ALH 11-52

Introduced: 1/10/2011

Version: 1

Current Status: Filed

Matter Type: Appeal-Legislative
Hearing

Appeal of Special Tax Assessment for 1736 MARGARET STREET for Project #:J1107A,
Assessment #: 118005.

..Property Address

1736 Margaret Street

Cost: \$160.00

Service Charge: \$140.00

Total Assessment: \$300.00

Gold Card Returned by: Dave Jones

Type of Order/Fee: SA

Nuisance: Tall grass and weeds

Date of Orders: September 14, 2010

Compliance Date: September 20, 2010

Re-Check Date: September 28, 2010

Date Work Done: September 29, 2010

Work Order #: 10-903460

Returned Mail?: No

Comments:

History of Orders on Property: Open file with orders to make repairs to garage

Legislative Hearing Officer Recommendation

Approve the assessment.

Dave Jones appeared.

Inspector Essling reported that 1736 Margaret Street is a Summary Abatement Order for tall grass and weeds. It was mailed September 14, 2010 with a compliance date of September 20, 2010. A re-check was done on September 28, 2010 and found to be in non-compliance. A Work Order was sent to Parks and completed on September 29, 2010 for a cost of \$160 with a service charge of \$140 for a total of \$300. There was no returned mail.

Mr. Jones is not quite sure why he is here. The problem has been going on for 23 years but he didn't start saving the letters until about 10 years ago. He is not sure what crime he has committed this time. The letter refers to property clean-up from September 30, 2010 to October 27, 2010.

Ms. Moermond asked to see the video; Inspector Seeley replied that they do not have a video for this property.

Ms. Moermond noted that Mr. Jones had been at a hearing not too long ago, and she remembered that he tends to let his lawn grow quite long. Then, when he gets a letter from the City, he goes out and mows it. Maybe once or twice he did not have it mowed when the City came back to re-check. Mr. Essling noted that there are about ten (10) Abatement Orders on record for Mr. Jones' property and he confirmed that they have all been completed by Mr. Jones except for two (2).

Mr. Jones wanted to explain his situation because he has never had that opportunity before. For 23 years no one from the City has ever come out to his property, looked around, talked to him face to face and asked, "What's the problem? What do you have to say for yourself?" No one's ever given him a chance to say anything. They claim they get a complaint and then they sit back in their office and fire off one of these threatening letters to him. Apparently, Jack Reardon, who signs the letters, get to destroy peoples' lives but no one ever gets to see what he looks like. It doesn't seem fair. He went on to say that every year he waits until the end of May or the first of June to mow his lawn because he rakes it after he mows it. Ms. Moermond reminded him that this particular time was in September. Mr. Jones continued to say that he always waits until his lawn gets healthy before he starts ripping into it with his rake and mows it. In 2010, it rained and rained and rained; and his grass never got dry. His mower doesn't work on wet grass because it then doesn't eject the clippings out of the side but only packs them up underneath so the mower doesn't run. It works fine on dry grass no matter how long it is; it doesn't cut wet grass worth a damn. This time, it didn't get dry so that he could go out and mow, so the City came out and cut it but they really butchered his lawn. It looked just terrible. They also cut some branches off his apple tree.

Ms. Moermond recommended approving the assessment.