



City of Saint Paul

City Hall and Court House
15 West Kellogg
Boulevard
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Master

File Number: RLH VBR 25-10

File ID: RLH VBR 25-10

Type: Resolution LH Vacant
Building Registration

Status: Passed

Version: 2

**Contact
Number:**

In Control: City Council

File Created: 02/13/2025

File Name: 159 W. Pennsylvania Ave.

Final Action: 03/19/2025

Title: Appeal of Jaswant Teekasingh to a Vacant Building Registration Notice at 159
PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE WEST.

Notes: Walk-in. LH teleconference on 2/25/25 between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. Call the following:

- 1) Jaswant Teekasingh, 612-839-4339;
- 2) Gus Nicklow, attorney, 612-339-9122.

Agenda Date: 03/19/2025

Agenda Number: 57

Sponsors: Bowie

Enactment Date:

Attachments: 159 Pennsylvania Ave W.appeal.2-13-25.pdf, 159
Pennsylvania Ave W.vacate order 12-2-24.pdf, 159
Pennsylvania Ave W.vacate order 10-17-24.pdf, 159
Pennsylvania Ave W.photo 1-29-25.pdf, 159
Pennsylvania Ave W.photo 2-3-25.pdf, 159
Pennsylvania Ave W.Email Chain.11-11-24, 159
Pennsylvania Ave W.Email Chain.1-14-25, 159
Pennsylvania Ave W.Email Chain.1-11-25, 159
Pennsylvania Ave W.Email Chain.2-24-25, 159
Pennsylvania Ave W.Teekasingh Ltr.2-28-25, 159
Pennsylvania Ave W.Teekasingh Ltr.3-7-25

Financials Included?:

Contact Name:

Hearing Date:

Entered by: Racquel.Naylor@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Ord Effective Date:

Related Files: RLH FCO 24-86; RLH VO 24-34

History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	Legislative Hearings	02/25/2025	Laid Over	Legislative Hearings	03/04/2025		
	Action Text: Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 3/4/2025						
	Notes: Layover to March 4, 2025 at 1 pm (unable to reach PO).						
	Tried calling x 4339 : unable to leave Voicemail; disconnected call.						
	Voicemail left at x1485 at 2:32 PM: this is Marcia Moermond from St. Paul City Council calling you about 159 Pennsylvania. We're trying to reach you about your appealed Tax assessment for 159						

Pennsylvania.

Left a Voicemail on x 4339 again at 2:35 pm: this is Marcia Moermond from St. Paul City Council calling you about your appeal for 159 Pennsylvania. We'll try calling your attorney. If we can't get through we'll reschedule next week and if we can't connect then I'll recommend denial of the appeal.

Called Atty Gus Niclo and secretary said he was out for the day. Voicemail left at 2:38 pm: I'm trying to reach Gus Nicklo this is Marcia Moermond from St. Paul City Council calling you to conduct a hearing on Jaswant Teekasingh's building at 159 Pennsylvania. We've tried calling Mr. Teekasingh twice on his cell and once on his business line and been unable to reach him. We're going to lay this over a week.

1 Legislative Hearings 03/04/2025 Referred City Council 03/19/2025

Action Text: Referred to the City Council due back on 3/19/2025

Notes: Deny the appeal. Property remains a Cat 2 VB but doesn't require a CCI and waive the VB fee for 90 days (to May 11, 2025) and allow permits.

Jaswant Teekasingh, owner, appeared
Gus Nicklow, attorney, appeared via phone

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor Brian Schmidt: I did go out on the reinspection date, the Monday following after the Friday deadline. That was January 3, I went out the 6th. I met Mr. Teekasingh out there. Still no electrical permit. He said he was still opening things up for the electrical inspection. He did tell me applied for a grant for upgrade the electrical lighting in the building. I questioned why he didn't contact me ahead of time about the conflicts in meeting the deadlines set here. I advised he should call here at that point. He did not have a copy of the grant at that time nor the contract information for the contractor doing the work. I did receive that later on. That is now in the file.

When the deadline was not met I had to speak to Mr. Dornfeld about the permits and his next intentions. Took about a week, and then we referred it to the Vacant Building program.

Moermond: it is now in the Vacant Building program and that is under appeal. That is for revoking the Certificate for blowing the deadline established by Council.

Nicklow: I'd like Mr. Teekasingh to speak to the facts and background having been there. Then I can speak about what we'd like to see moving forward.

Teekasingh: my sticking point is the contractor to do the electrical work. He isn't giving me a definite timeline for doing the work. That's been going on since the end of November. He said he couldn't start until after January 15. They never scheduled me. Currently I'm trying to figure out what is the deficiency in the work that needs to be done. Just the permit? Water standing in the ceiling it has been repaired, but still shows on the list. Marcia (Building inspector) said I just need to close the building permit. I can't bring another electrical contractor in since I have the contractor to do the grant.

I'm in limbo trying to figure out where I go from here to get this resolved. The Vacant Building certification Brian told me it could be appealed, I came here and they said no. Gus and I spoke to Adrian.

Moermond: to be clear, the Vacant Building registration hadn't yet been mailed so it was just a matter of waiting until the orders were issued so it could be appealed. A question of timing. You came in before it was issued; we can't accept an appeal of something that hadn't been issued yet.

Nicklow: Jas, you received a letter saying it could be appealed within 10 days, right? Maybe we're talking about something different.

Moermond: no, it is the same letter and a question of timing. He came both before and after the letter.

Nicklow: I know he came after he received the letter.

Teekasingh: I came on the initial appeal of the revocation; first the office said I could, and then they said I couldn't. Then the decision was made it had to go to the Vacant Building status first before I can appeal. Last week I was waiting for your phone call, I got a phone call with no call back number or

message and no access code.

Moermond: there is no call back number or access code. We call you into the hearing. We called twice, at 2:32 and 2:25. We also called your attorney unsuccessfully. I'm sorry we didn't connect, and I hear you have a complaint about that as well as the Vacant Building registration component. Why don't we bring ourselves to today. It was determined to be a Vacant Building on January 6, and the deadline was blown but they didn't send it to the Vacant Building program until February 12.

Schmidt: there was a disconnect in information coming from Mr. Teekasingh, Matt, and I, all waiting for information. Yes, it was a considerable time. After the Vacant Building registration Mr. Teekasingh came to talk to me.

Moermond: and we only look at your orders which follow up on previous orders and was subject to an appeal and Council determination. You can appeal the next order forthcoming which is the Vacant Building registration. All of that being said can you be more specific about your ask.

Teekasingh: waiting for the electrical work to be done and I haven't been given a timeline from the contractor. I'm trying to find another contractor to close out the office permit in the meantime. I'm just sitting waiting at his mercy. Everything else is coming along. I'm trying to get taxes done. Next week I'm gone for spring break. The contractor hasn't given me a timeline for the work. I'm in limbo due to that.

Moermond: so, you're looking for what?

Teekasingh: I need time to get it done, the work will done I'm just not sure when. What do I need to be compliant? Just the electrical permit? What is on Brian's letter that has been satisfied.

Moermond: Mr. Schmidt, can you talk about the electrical violations?

Schmidt: there are some fixtures that were changed and moved and when the building inspector went out---

Teekasingh: they didn't come out, I sent photos.

Schmidt: yes, he sent photos and Inspector H noticed the electrical work done and requested an electrical permit. Mine started out as ceiling repairs to office remodeling, the work has constantly expanded from the original call. I need the building permit closed and to do that we need the electrical permit pulled and closed.

Moermond: I did get quite a few emails between you (Mr. Teekasingh) and Ms. Holliday.

Teekasingh: most recent was January 14.

Moermond: I have that in the record. I have February 24 which is an ongoing chain from October. Some expectations between Mr. Schmidt and Ms. Holliday, as well as you, Mr. Teekasingh, January 10 asking about expectations. The building inspector says "per our last conversation you were informed that an electrical permit would be needed per Minnesota Statute 13.01(2)(0). Electrical work is not on the list of work exempt from the permit. That needs to be done before you can get your building permit closed."

What I was getting from her, because I asked for those records when you indicated you were having trouble getting instructions. The communication I got back was that there had been a lot of emails and calls to you and I did see in a lot of these emails you reiterated the same question over and over again. It was being answered from the building inspector's perspective. Where we are at is a building permit was required part of the work. A building permit was pulled. Work was done. As part of doing the work electrical fixtures were installed that made it that an electrical permit needed to be pulled because of that installation. The building inspector wanted that electrical work concluded under permit before she would sign off on the building permit portion. That's how they related to each other. You got a grant to do the work that's required, electrically, the electrical contractor is telling you you're in line and not giving you any timeline. Are they giving you a range?

Teekasingh: they were supposed to do it last week and they cancelled. They're telling me sometime in March now. Until they give me a deadline I can't really say specifics. In the meantime, I'm trying to find another contractor to come and pull the permit and close the portion out for the office if I can get that.

What I need from the Council is: is that all I need? According to the letters Inspector Schmidt has been sending me the citation deficiency is still the ceiling. Do I have to do more in there above and beyond the electrical permit?

Moermond: I think what happened before, the conditions changed between the issuance building permit and the Certificate of Occupancy orders and that change required the electrical permit.

Teekasingh: I don't want to cut you off. The whole process started when I spoke to the Building Inspector and she said she wanted one thing, and then another thing. Then she wanted another thing. Meaning, she wanted fire rated sheetrock. She asked for the screw patterns. Ok? She wanted to see photos. She hadn't visited the shop. She never made an inspection. She said she didn't need to come out and look at anything, just to send her photos.

Moermond: that sounds simpler for you.

Teekasingh: the electrical items she saw was where an existing outlet was. The wires were capped. When we did the ceiling, the drop ceiling outlets for the lights were all fluorescent tubes. They were replaced with cans. I didn't know I needed the permit; I would have done it at the time. My understanding from speaking to different contractors is everyone wants to see everything before they will pull a permit to make sure everything is within code when they pull it because the moment they sign their name on the permit they become responsible. That's been taking time. In addition to that, I had this other grant for the lighting in the shop to upgrade from tube lights to LEDs. I was trying to get one contract to do everything at once. His queue is so long I can't wait for him to do it. I have a couple others I've been trying to get ahold of, but no one is consistent or prompt. I'm just sitting here waiting. That's where I've been in limbo since October.

Moermond: yet we had a hearing—

Teekasingh: excuse me, at the last hearing I was told an electric permit was a separate issue. The building inspector included it as part of the permit.

Moermond: it sounds like that circumstance changed. I'd like to give you a window to get this done. It isn't an indefinite window. I understand you have a vacation planned and all this other stuff. You'll have to figure out how you meet your deadline. Did you get an extension? Yes you did. I do remember strictly hearing you talk about doing your electrical work when we had our hearing. Very specifically addressing it that you couldn't do your own electrical work when you had a Fire Certificate of Occupancy commercial building being inspected. It was covered November 19, and I do see your communication with Inspector Holliday followed that. Are you having a problem with using photographs with Ms. Holliday? I'm not seeing how it connects with this issue. Am I missing something?

Teekasingh: I brought it up because had I been told about the electrical on the onset I would have done it.

Moermond: I'm not accepting that. It was discussed and was a condition you changed. No, and I won't go down the path considering whether it was acceptable to look at photos in any way. It seems to me it is easier for you to provide photos in your own time and schedule for her review. Coming in and saying it is a problem, I don't think it is a problem. Should there be an inspection in the future? I'm not a building inspector but if I can do that for my customer I will do my best to do it.

We have your property going into the Vacant Building program February 11th. I will recommend the Council give you a 90-day waiver of the Vacant Building fee. That takes you to May 11th. You need to have your permit sign offs by then, then you aren't in the Vacant Building program and have no Vacant Building program fee. We have this listed as a Category 2, but I'm not sure we have conditions that make that necessary. We have a revoked certificate and minor building violations.

I'm going to recommend the Council make it not necessary to do a Team/Code Compliance Inspection. You just need to have your Fire Certificate of Occupancy reinstated. Mr. Schmidt is looking for closed permits.

Schmidt: as soon as those permits close I will call Mr. Teekasingh and say things are approved.

Moermond: so, you don't need to reinspect, those permits are evidence of corrections.

Schmidt: yes.

[discussion about proration of fee and process if necessary]

Nicklow: I know Mr. Teekasingh wants to comply and get it done and just needs to know what exactly needs to be done to satisfy the City. Do you think this 90 days is enough to get the electrical guy come in?

Teekasingh: I'm not holding my breath on the grant. I'm looking for another contractor to get the office stuff done sooner vs. later.

Moermond: when you say "just the office", I don't know what is required by the trades inspector.

2	City Council	03/19/2025	Adopted	Pass
	Action Text:	Adopted		
2	Mayor's Office	03/26/2025	Signed	
	Action Text:	Signed		
