



City of Saint Paul

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Minutes - Final

Legislative Hearings

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Tuesday, February 17, 2026

9:00 AM

Room 330 City Hall & Court House/Remote

10:00 a.m. Hearings

Special Tax Assessments

- 1 **RLH TA 25-430** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 384 EARL STREET. (File No. J2513TW1, Assessment No. 258595)

Sponsors: Johnson

Delete the assessment.

Ikram Ali, owner, appeared via phone

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor Richard Kedrowski: May 27, 2025 a tall grass and weeds order was sent. Inspected June 2 and not in compliance. Work order was issued which resulted in a total assessment of \$624.

Ali: I usually get citations and make sure I do them. I was hospitalized May 29 so I wasn't opening my mail. I didn't get it at all. I know it is my fault, but wanted to appeal.

Moermond: it was pretty tall looking at the photos. I'm sympathetic you weren't home. Do you have other adults in the home?

Ali: just my mother, and she's 75 and can't read.

Moermond: that's what I was wondering.

[call dropped twice.

Called back 10:18 am and got Voicemail: I'll recommend your assessment gets deleted and you are committing to me the mail is open and read in a timely fashion. If you're out of town or hospitalized you have someone checking your mail. I'm thinking you can make that commitment with me. Otherwise, you have our email address if you want to address this further]

Moermond: we have the unfortunate case of owner in the hospital and mother cannot read so wasn't able to deal with the notice and I'm therefore recommending deletion of

the assessment based on that commitment from her.

Referred to the City Council due back on 3/4/2026

11:00 a.m. Hearings

Summary & Vehicle Abatement Orders

- 2 [RLH SAO 26-16](#) Appeal of Victoria Pwo, on behalf of Nyar Pwo, to a Summary Abatement Order at 399 BLAIR AVENUE.

Sponsors: Bowie

Layover to LH February 24, 2026 at 11 am for discussion on deadlines after confirmation of removed vehicles.

*Victoria Pwo, daughter of owners & acting interpreter, appeared via phone
Nyar Pwo, owner, appeared via phone*

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor Richard Kedrowski: 2-2-26 Summary Abatement Order was sent for disposal of appliances, auto parts, scrap metal, scrap wood and miscellaneous debris from property. Also a Correction Notice sent for vehicles on property in various conditions suspect of illegal auto repair at the property. Similar issue happened in 2023 when the owner dealt with that but we're back into it again. Also a commercial tow truck on the property.

Victoria Pwo: my dad says he understands that you guys have these code restrictions for the property since it is residential, but he has one vehicle that is commercial and he wanted to appeal some more time for that. He thought when he graduated from school he would use it but it isn't really in good condition so that's why it is has been sitting there. He wanted more time to move it.

Moermond: does he have someone who is taking it?

Nyar Pwo: a junk yard is coming to get it but they said they need to wait for tax season and need 1 or 2 months and load up all the scrap metal in the truck and give it to them.

Moermond: so they will be taking the scrap metal too?

Nyar Pwo: yes. They took some of the cars already.

Moermond: what were you saying about tax season?

Nyar Pwo: I don't know, they said wait a couple of months for tax season. I'm not sure. They asked for 2 months to come get it.

Moermond: when did you have that conversation with them?

Nyar Pwo: last week.

Moermond: so that's the commercial vehicle and we can work on a deadline for that.

The same people are taking the scrap metal and auto parts?

Nyar Pwo: yes. Most are gone. Some belong to me. Sometimes my kids crash them and leave them there. They don't have funds to fix it.

Moermond: that's a lot of crashes.

Nyar Pwo: yeah, when my kids start learning how to drive. Then my wife has had a crash. My son in law had a couple crashes. We can't afford full coverage that's why we can't fix them. Just liability insurance.

Moermond: is this tow truck buyer going to be taking these damaged vehicles?

Nyar Pwo: they already took them all. All that's left is the tow truck and the rest are my project cars I have to fix.

Moermond: I'm thinking if you have those 5 or 6 vehicles gone already, you've made a good faith effort. I'd like an inspector to confirm that and if that's confirmed and they're gone I can give an extension on some of those other things and the tow truck.

Nyar Pwo: yep.

Moermond: when would be a good time for the inspector to meet someone there?

Nyar Pwo: ok.

Kedrowski: it is my file. I am happy to come out, but once we get this addressed we can't have you bringing damaged vehicles back to the house.

Moermond: let's get that confirmed then we can talk again about an extension on some of the other things.

Kedrowski: I can stop by today and check.

Nyar Pwo: yes, I'm around today.

Moermond: we'll talk next Tuesday and lock in an extension.

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 2/24/2026

**3 RLH SAO
26-14**

Appeal of Susan K. Smith to a Summary Abatement Order at 1496
UPPER AFTON ROAD.

Sponsors: Johnson

Grant to March 13, 2026 for compliance.

Susan Smith, owner, appeared via phone

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Smith: I didn't file to argue, I just filed to ask for a time extension. I fully accept responsibility. Our property was a mess, I agree with that. Luckily, the weather really cooperated the last week and my husband and I were able to complete a lot more than I had anticipated. I thought everything was frozen.

Staff report by Supervisor Richard Kedrowski: February 2, 2026 a Summary Abatement Order was sent to address storage containers (milk crates, totes), tire and other miscellaneous debris in backyard, driveway and throughout the property. Some household items, some furniture and some scrap metal. Appeal was filed prior to reinspection.

Smith: I'm so proud of us. I feel like the outside perimeter is about 95% complete. We have a lot of garbage in the driveway that will be removed tomorrow morning. The inside I have been working on, that's where I get confused about what is ok or not. The bins, totes, milk crates I've been working on clearing it. The backyard I'm at least 50% complete.

Moermond: one thing I noticed looking at the photos was you have a garbage can in the back but it is turned on its side. Is it being used?

Smith: yes, unfortunately that was when it was really windy and I just left it there after it fell over. I don't generally leave my house every day.

Moermond: do you have a full garage or is there room?

Smith: well that's the other thing we've been doing is taking stuff out of the garage so we can move things into the garage. That's a piece of the project. We've been working on that too.

Moermond: I ask that because I see a couple of tires, and there's a program in the spring from the Mosquito control district where they will pick them up, so if you can store them in the garage until then you can get them removed for free.

Smith: we only had one tire there.

Moermond: oh, I see that now. So that's something we can send you information on. Tell me, the stuff in the middle you say is halfway done, what is a realistic deadline do you think?

Smith: a couple of weeks.

Moermond: that's reasonable. I'd like to give you an extension to March 13th.

Smith: where can we store our trash can?

Moermond: they're fine outside.

Smith: ok. Our neighbor doesn't like looking at him. We pretty much live in our backyard in the summer. It is a living space so we cook out there, we have several benches and things like that. That wouldn't be considered a violation?

Moermond: no. Outside furniture and grills are fine.

Smith: is there anything in my back yard—I realize wood, I know about keeping pests out. Is there anything I need to flag to not have? Should I call Department of Safety and Inspections with questions?

Moermond: we could have an inspector come out to talk things through.

Smith: I was told that wasn't possible; that would be great.

Moermond: that's normal when things are under appeal. Now we can have someone walk through things with you.

Smith: I'm flexible. Can they contact me and set it up?

Kedrowski: we can do that.

Referred to the City Council due back on 3/4/2026

Correction Orders

4 RLH CO 26-2 Appeal of Faustin Grant Felmlee to a Correction Notice at 222 WINIFRED STREET EAST.

Sponsors: Noecker

Grant to April 1, 2026 for compliance (via approved zoning or discontinued use of site for auto repair).

Faustin Felmlee, owner, appeared via phone

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor Richard Kedrowski: February 2, 2026 a CN was sent to property regarding potential illegal auto repair at the property. Also potential vehicle condition at property. Appeal filed prior to reinspetion.

Felmlee: I've lived in the cities for about 3 years. I own a detailing company down in Le Seur for 10 years. I continued that business and some mechanical work. I moved up here with my girlfriend. She referred me to some of her friends who live up here to do some work for them. Then kept getting referrals. I am certified through Ford, I was lead tech at Ford for 10 years. I started doing more and more mechanical work and I started doing it full time. I went to Secretary of State and applied for—

Moermond: yes, I have that paperwork.

Felmlee: that's all the stuff I did. They never asked me about zoning. I didn't even know that was a thing up here. They just asked what business name I wanted. I wasn't sure what else I have to do. I do file taxes, I have an EIN. I thought I was following all the rules. I didn't even know zoning was a thing. Obviously with the vehicles and stuff, I don't have any illegally parked. Usually there's one in my driveway and sometimes on the street once it is done. I don't have 10 vehicles sitting there. I don't have any employees right now. I was looking at hiring someone part time, but as of right now this is a sole propriety business. I'd be happy to answer any other questions.

Moermond: what I am concerned with is that when you go to the Secretary of State you are filing to have a LLC so they're saying you can be that for tax and legal purposes, and update it every year. You own that name. What it doesn't do is say you have a license to repair cars or look at where your business is located. It is simply the name itself. Zoning does exist throughout the state. I can't speak specifically to where you were outstate. What I can say is there is no question you are running an auto repair

business out of your home and you are going to need to find somewhere else to do that. It simply isn't allowed in a residential area.

Are you able to appeal that? Yes, you can talk to Board of Zoning appeals. You can talk to them about the zoning designation for the house. I'm thinking they'll be pretty strict on it, but I can't put words in their mouth. What I can give is an extension to get this sorted out. I'm going to give you until April 1 to have compliance/approval or have it gone.

Felmlee: is there a reason why I wouldn't be approved? I've never had any issues. I have great Google reviews. Is there a way I can find out who complained and put this on your table? It is frustrating because MN generally supports small businesses.

Moermond: I can't speak on behalf of zoning, but I can speak generally. Separating out uses like chemicals, or a tannery, we wanted to keep things separate for health and safety issues. Most places automotive repair is considered a commercial use. If there's a possibility for an exception I'd recommend you look at appealing this, but for my purposes I only have a route to extension. If you get permission, you're good, if you don't then it has to stop happening here.

That April 1 should give you time to file and appeal with Zoning.

Referred to the City Council due back on 3/4/2026

1:30 p.m. Hearings

Orders To Vacate - Fire Certificate of Occupancy

- 5 [RLH VO 26-8](#) Appeal of Florence Cherry Kimmel Minister Scarlet Rose to a Fire Inspection Report, which includes condemnation, at 787 HOWELL STREET NORTH: Final Determination. (Refer to Legislative Hearing March 3, 2026)

Sponsors: Coleman

Refer back to LH March 3, 2026 at 1:30 pm to discuss updates on HVAC/furnace repairs.

Florence Cherry Kimmel, owner, appeared

Staff update by Supervisor Keith Demarest: an update on the furnace. I did just reach out to Ko Moua from the energy assistance program who is coordinating the system says as of 12:20 this afternoon: Our contractor who visited the property on Friday evaluated the system but was unable to properly test it. They informed us that preliminary work is required to fully assess the extent of the damage before a complete estimate can be provided. We received the same recommendation from another contractor as well.

However, this contractor is willing to conduct the testing at approximately one-quarter of the cost quoted by the other contractor. The testing has been approved and is scheduled for Thursday, February 19th. A bid will follow once the assessment is completed.

The household remains eligible for our furnace services; however, until we have a full understanding of the scope of work required, we are unable to provide a definite answer at this time.

Kimmel: testing is 8:30 am Thursday, then they'll be able to give a proper bid. The contractor is trying to figure out the best way to approach it. It helps it has been very warm we wouldn't have even used to furnace really. I really don't think repairs will be extensive.

Moermond: testing done Thursday am and use that to determine where to go next. That will give us the timing question. Path A or Path B and length of time. I'm looking for what that will be.

You are actively working with them and committed to that. I think I can continue this for 2 weeks and you may be done by then. They're on the case. You're moving forward. Let's talk again in 2 weeks and hopefully everything is done and there's nothing to talk about. March 3rd.

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/25/2026

6 [RLH VO 26-13](#)

Appeal of Janice Ruchie, Occupant, to a Fire Inspection Report, which includes condemnation, at 1877 GRAND AVENUE, APARTMENT 1.

Sponsors: Jost

Layover to LH February 24, 2026 at 1:30 pm for further discussion.

*Wade Piper, Interfaith Action, appeared
Janice Ruchie, occupant, appeared*

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor Keith Demarest: this is a 3 story apartment complex. November 29, 2025 we received a Form 4 referral from the St. Paul Fire Department. They responded to a gas leak reported heavy content in unit 1. A few days later Inspector Stanich and myself responded for an initial inspection. We were met by the tenant and property manager and did an inspection. At that inspection, very heavy content load was found to the point where only one person can shimmy into the door to get to open space in the entry way of the apartment. Based on that, the available BTUs in the unit, thereat to live and property, the unit was called for immediate condemnation out of concern for the health and safety of the tenant and tenants in the building. There have been a couple of follow up inspections with some minimal progress but not substantial for us to close out our case. As it stands now it remains condemned due to those life safety concerns for tenant and tenants of building.

Moermond: it looks like it was condemned originally on December 8th. So this has been strung along for 2 months, why?

Demarest: minimal progress made. Inspector conferred with us, so we pushed it out, but enough progress hasn't been made.

Moermond: condemnation has remained with a rolling vacate date.

Demarest: correct.

Moermond: Mr. Piper it appears you've recently joined the team, which is great. It sounds like, Ms. Ruchie, you're struggling to handle this alone. There are resources and you aren't the first person to find yourself in a situation beyond your control.

Ruchie: I've had four major falls recently outside that have really affected my ability to even push and pull things to get them out. The ice problem in our area is really bad.

Moermond: I'm concerned about your ability to navigate within the space and if you fell the difficulty emergency personnel would have in getting to you--you're shaking your head no?

Ruchie: no, I can get around fine. It is easy for me to get around.

Moermond: for you. But it isn't just about you navigating. It is someone coming in and being unable to.

Ruchie: that's what Travis and Der said too.

Moermond: when there's so much content inside the home, it is a fire that burns hot and long.

Ruchie: I keep so much water around for the plants.

Moermond: no, no. It isn't enough. You don't have time to get water, all you can do is get out. Do not fight a fire if it were to happen. Now, I want to emphasize this, but this is super clear this isn't safe. What we're talking about is putting a deadline on it that you have to meet or you have to find different housing. Right now, I hear it isn't safe from the inspector. People die in homes that are hoarded as badly as this one is. I want to keep you housed, but I'm balancing that against the safety issue. I personally would have preferred having this conversation 2 months ago. We are here, you have someone here helping you, but this is it. It gets done now or it gets closed down. What is the plan moving forward?

Piper: I'm a housing worker. I have a relationship with the landlord. Right now what we've been working on, Mark her brother has been helping her make progress. Janice wants to leave where she's at right now. We're trying to find a place with better services and some mental health services to check in weekly. We have an initial intake for an ARMS worker in March. The landlord isn't going to hold her to rent as long as we get it cleaned out. She's just not meeting the monthly income requirements. Luckily she has a sizable pension kicking in this week. I have calls set up to move her into a couple of different places. Then we can provide the income guarantees they need. We're trying to address both underlying causes, both mental health to check in more consistently.

We're hoping in the next couple of weeks to get her into a new place anyway. Mark had talked about hiring a crew to come in and deep clean everything. I'm trying to make sure this doesn't become a problem again and come up with a longer-term solution for the things she cares about.

Moermond: from what I'm hearing, we're looking at a relocation date you'd like to see more like April 1?

Piper: yeah. Even March 15th if we can find a place.

Demarest: I understand and respect the situation. I spend 10 years as a firefighter and been in units with content like this. All of the items are there to feed a fire. Buildings

are built with the understanding of normal items—a couch, a TV stand—you wouldn't survive any fire in there right now. Likely the building wouldn't either. It wasn't made for that kind of a threat. That's why we're here.

Ruchie: it is an old building.

Moermond: I believe you the building is solid. I'm sure the walls are plaster, but it isn't the structure—if the fire doesn't damage it the smoke will.

Ruchie: some of the windows are cracked.

Moermond: stop. I think you're trying to convince me it isn't as bad as it is. What do we do now to make you as safe as possible before you land someplace else. That's my concern. Your safety here. I have seen too many people who transfer those items into a storage space and end up paying exorbitant rent over multiple years where they can't pay it anymore and then everything is gone. This is a good point to cut ties with what you don't need and use that income.

Demarest: getting to the point where someone can get a stretcher through is important.

Ruchie: Travis did mention that. I've been working on widening it.

Demarest: we ask for 24 inches of clearance.

Moermond: I think a yardstick with complete clearance. Take one and make sure it is clear. Not only for someone to get to you but for you to be able to get out. I also want to stay I strongly advise against using a storage unit. That's a bill that never ends. Mr. Demarest can you get out there before next Tuesday to check on those clearance things?

Demarest: I can get out there Monday.

Moermond: let's aim for really clear pathways. I'm not negotiating on that at all. No using the stove or oven, candles, lighters, anything.

Demarest: 12 pm on February 23rd.

Moermond: you need out. It is a terrible situation you find yourself in. I really need to sound an alarm bell on this. Let's check in next week and see if we can continue with an extension based on what I hear back.

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 2/24/2026