



City of Saint Paul

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Minutes - Final Legislative Hearings

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651-266-8585

Tuesday, October 20, 2015

9:00 AM

Room 330 City Hall & Court House

9:00 a.m. Hearings

Special Tax Assessments

- 1 **RLH TA 15-505** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 333 SHERBURNE AVENUE (File No. J1602A, Assessment No. 168501).

Sponsors: Thao

Ms. Moermond:

-Laid Over to watch the VIDEO

-city cleaned up fire pit: removed wood, tiles, ashes, etc, from pit

-quite a bit of material

-will recommend approval

Approve the assessment.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/6/2016

- 2 **RLH TA 15-510** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 150 ACKER STREET EAST (File No. J1602E, Assessment No. 168301).

Sponsors: Brendmoen

Ms. Mai Vang:

-Appellant couldn't make it to the hearing; he is in Honduras and won't be back until Apr 2016

Ms. Moermond:

-read owner's letter

-he's out of town in Honduras

-there's confusion with new tenants, who should mow the grass; it was mowed Jul 11, 2015; city sent someone out to mow Jun 12 but it had been done already

-Orders were sent Jun 5, 2015; compliance Jun 9; re-checked Jun 11

-crew went out Jun 15 and it had been done by owner

-they were given quite a bit of time

-will recommend approval of the assessment

Approve the assessment.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016

- 3 [RLH TA 15-515](#) Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 972 CENTRAL AVENUE WEST (under 974 Central Ave W) (File No. J1602E, Assessment No. 168301).
- Sponsors:** Thao
- Approve; no show.*
- Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016**
- 4 **RLH TA 15-516** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 474 CHARLES AVENUE (File No. J1602E, Assessment No. 168301).
- Sponsors:** Thao
- Vicki Ayshford, owner, appeared.*
- Inspector Paula Seeley:*
- tall grass & weeds Order sent Jun 3, 2015; compliance Jun 7; re-checked Jun 8*
 - work order sent – done by owner*
 - PAEC cost: \$120 + \$35 service charge = \$155*
 - as of today, there's a Summary Abatement Order on a sofa, TV along garage, etc.*
- Ms. Ayshford:*
- never got a letter from the city*
 - moved her from a small town, where we don't have the problem of people dumping garbage at someone else's house*
 - she sprayed painted on the apron on the back of her house: "No Dumping. No Trespassing"*
 - the VB and couch were both dumped there*
 - purchase home Jun 12, 2015*
 - she did not know anything about any of this and people have dumped more things than just that couch and TV; she got rid of some of them: end table, coffee table, another TV, etc.*
 - she has RA; she doesn't own a pick-up; she didn't know that she was going have to constantly deal with huge amounts of garbage*
 - she's had friends from Cannon Falls come up and she's been paying them \$50 for gas, etc. to take it to the dump for her*
- Ms. Moermond:*
- you bought this property after the bill went out*
 - the previous owner had been given the Orders to take care of the nuisance but he didn't and it resulted in this PAEC*
 - by the time this bill went out, you didn't have this information*
 - will recommend deletion*
- Delete the assessment.*
- Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016**
- 5 [RLH TA 15-500](#) Deleting the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 722 CHARLES AVENUE (File No. VB1601, Assessment No. 168800).
- Sponsors:** Thao
- Delete the assessment. Per Steve Magner, file should have been closed and code compliance inspection issued by July 31, 2015. (No hearing necessary)*

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/6/2016

- 6 [RLH TA 15-506](#) Deleting the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 1191 HAMLIN AVENUE (File No. J1602P , Assessment No. 168401).

Sponsors: Stark

Delete the assessment; graffiti was not on this owner's property.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016

- 7 **RLH TA 15-523** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 465 HATCH AVENUE (File No. VB1602, Assessment No. 168801).

Sponsors: Brendmoen

Arlene Favors, Favors Investments LLC, owner, appeared.

Inspector Joe Yannarely:

*-has been in the Vacant Building Program since Jul 8, 2014
-have a new owner; went thru sale review process; sale approval documents went thru Aug 5, 2015
-every permit has been pulled
-VB fee of \$2025 + \$160 service charge = \$2180*

Ms. Favors:

*-it's coming along nicely
-will be done in about 6 weeks
-problem: I bought the property after that VB date; closed Jul 24, 2014
-she didn't know anything about that VB fee that should have been paid by the previous owner
-we closed with her attorney; they didn't mention anything about it*

Ms. Moermond:

*-2014-2015 VB fee was paid
-today, we're looking at the 2015-2016 VB fee; it would have billed, if not re-billed at that point; the seller knew it was pending and it wasn't disclosed in the closing; legally, they should have told you*

Ms. Favors:

-the previous owner bought the property a month before I bought it

Ms. Moermond:

*-the VB fee is attached to the building
-you will be done in 6 weeks
-this is not on your tax bill yet
-you will have been in the program for 3 months
-if you meet that 6 week deadline, she will delete the assessment; if you can't meet that 6-week deadline, you will need to pay part of it*

If owner can meet the 6 week deadline, will delete the VB fee.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2015

- 8 **RLH TA 15-440** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 992 HATCH AVENUE. (File No. VB1601, Assessment No. 168800)

Sponsors: Brendmoen

Dale K Ross, owner, appeared.

Inspector Joe Yannarely, Vacant Buildings:

*-Vacant Building file opened Dec 23, 2014 due to Revocation of Fire C of O
-has notes from that time: LHO said that we would hold the VB fee for 90 days to allow owner to get C of O re-instated
-as of today, the C of O has not been re-instated; the property is still Revoked Vacate
-VB fees are due for \$1440 + \$155 service charge = \$1595*

Mr. Ross:

*-believes that there's a 2nd assessment for a VB fee that's greater than that, as well
-they had all repairs fixed in the house with one remaining item: a fence that enclosed the property; for rental purposes, the board recommended that we remove the fence; they decided not to remove the fence and put the house up "for sale"
-he notified Lisa that on Mar 24, 2014 via email that everything was resolved but there were going to discontinue to rent the house and sell it
-has an email from A.J. saying that there was no need for a Fire C of O if we had no intention to rent the home and are putting it up "for sale"
-at that point, he was under the understanding that there were no other fees required for the house, if I was going to sell the house
-from Mar 2014 until now, we've had 2 offers; today, we have a closing date of Oct 30, 2015 for this property*

Ms. Moermond:

-when we talked in Jan 2015, she recommended that the VB fee be waived for 90 days and it wouldn't have even gone to assessment if you would have had the building repaired within that time frame

Mr. Ross:

-once the repairs were done on Mar 24, 2015, he notified Ms. Martin via email that everything had been done; then, it was sent over to A.J. Neis and he said that we don't have to the Fire C of O inspection if we had no intention of renting the house

Ms. Moermond:

-so, did Inspector Lisa Martin go out and look at the house?

Mr. Ross:

-no; and I asked her to. I said, "Can you please schedule an inspection?" and she said, "No" (he thinks that was based on A.J.'s email - no need for an inspection if you have no intention of renting the house)

Ms. Moermond:

-she thinks that A.J. probably didn't have the background when he answered that; she asked Inspector Shaff if she had access to information about that

Ms. Shaff:

-"I do." Inspector Martin put in a note on Mar 24, 2015 for A.J. Neis, "This will be a VB 2 changed by Matt Dornfeld; the dryer vent was replaced and permit approved; needs the code compliance per A.J."

Ms. Moermond:

*-it wasn't heard that way, evidently
-doesn't have the list of Orders that were required*

Mr. Ross:

-he paid a \$447 inspection fee Sep 10, 2015 that came in his mailbox so that he can have all these inspections done to get it off the VB 2 list; he sent an email asking for an update on the inspections and he has 1 email saying that they are waiting on 1 additional inspection to be done for "something"

-the house is closing Oct 30 and he needs to provide the buyer the information that this has all been resolved

-I paid for the code comp report but I haven't received any report

-he gave the lock box combination to DSI; someone has been inside and has done some inspection

-he talked with Reid Soley, who said that they are waiting for an inspector to go in

-he doesn't know if this inspection was necessary in the first place since we were putting it up for sale

Mr. Yannarely:

-he paid for code compl insp Sep 10, 2015

-it doesn't look like the code compliance inspection is completed yet

Ms. Shaff:

-Inspector Martin's notes: on Jan 7, per LHO, gave 90 days to remove fencing and get C of O re-insptated

-Mar 9, she sent A.J. an email

-Mar 12, per A.J. - the fence is not moved; no contact from property owner; send to VB 2

Ms. Moermond:

-but that wasn't the full 90 days

Mr. Ross:

-I reached out to A.J. on Mar 24, 2015 because we had everything completed at that point to have the inspection done

Ms. Moermond:

-I will call Mr. Jim Seeger, who runs the code compliance program and see what they are finding out there

-you have 2 things in play: 1) VB fee; and 2) the requirement for the code compliance and being able to sell it; both of which are expensive propositions; she'd like to look at it a little more before she makes her recommendation

Mr. Ross:

-what do I tell the buyer?

Ms. Moermond:

-tell him we don't have a finished code compliance inspection report; and since it's a VB, you're going to need that to disclose to the purchaser what the problems are or what they aren't; that can be substituted for a TISH (they've had that done already -per Mr. Ross)

-if it's a Cat 2 VB, your buyer is going to have to be qualified to rehab a Cat 2

-I want to find out why there wasn't a full 90 day waiver given before it was made a Cat 2; that can really have an impact

-she also wants to find out the variety of things she can learn from the TISH and the code compl in

-will put a decision on the record in 2 weeks, Nov 3, 2015

Mr. Yannarely:

-it looks like Seeger's been out there, judging from the notes; he just may not have wrapped it all together

-he will talk with Mr. Seeger to try to get it wrapped up this week
-looks like all have been out there but the mechanical inspector says, "Need some information" (Sep 24); other wise, plumbing, electrical and bldg have been out there; mech just has a question
-he will email Mr. Seeger right now and say that LHO wants an update

Ms. Moermond:

-she'd like a write-up of what he has, so far; we need something this week

Mr. Ross:

-the buyer lives in an apartment right now; their plan is to buy the house Oct 30 and move in; so, are they able to move in?

Ms. Moermond:

-I don't have an answer for you yet; they're working on it
-we will let you know this week

Ms. Ross:

-we're going to have the furnace re-wrapped this week

Ms. Moermond:

The house was condemned for lack of water service in March of this year. It was then sent to the vacant building program. Owner appealed this and was given a 90-day fee waiver if he could get his certificate of occupancy reinstated. He did not do that. The vacant building fee was billed in late May and sent to assessment after that because it was unpaid. This is the assessment under appeal. The requirement for a code compliance inspection has been outlined in all correspondence from the time this entered the vacant building program. Ms. Moermond's recommendation to get his Fire C of O reinstated was a way to get out from underneath that requirement. At this juncture, she will recommend to the Council that his appeal is denied.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/6/2016

9 RLH TA 15-488 Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 752 JESSIE STREET (File No. J1602A, Assessment No. 168501).

Sponsors: Brendmoen

Darrell Lewis-Bui, owner, appeared.

Inspector Paula Seeley:

-Emergency Summary Abatement Order due to refuse all over
-Summary Abatement Order issued Jul 22 for excessive foul garbage near alley and rear yard; compliance the following morning at 9 am
-she made a phone call and left a message on the voice mail
-sent to AKP Investments LLC, 2515 White Bear Ave #A8-121, Maplewood; De Lewis Properties, P O Box 17202, St. Paul; and Delewis Properties, LLC, 435 Maryland Ave E; and Occupant
-city crew cost: \$288 + \$160 service charge = \$448
-quite a history on the property
-photo in file

Ms. Moermond:

-half dozen large contractor bags

Mr. Lewis-

-we've been having a lot of problems with that property; the tenants living behind the alley dump their garbage there; he cut back all the brush for visibility; doesn't know what else to do
 -he hasn't approached the property owner; doesn't know what owns the two 4-plexes;
 -next course of action may be to put up cameras
 -on three different occasions, he's been there himself picking up garbage with his trailer
 -he had an issue with trash company; they had paperwork mixed up; A.K. Peterson was the previous owner and he didn't transfer info; he called to find out but didn't quite follow what had happened; the service didn't pick up for 2 weeks; now, it's all fixed
 -put out another container and he's been monitoring and found that the people across the alley were dumping
 -owns about 15 properties; this is a duplex
 -asking for a break on this
 -he's hired a guy to go around weekly to check for tires, couches, etc.
 -he is trying to do whatever he can; he knows it's his responsibility

Ms. Moermond:

-raw garbage is a huge problem
 -will recommend approval

Approve.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/6/2016

- 10** [RLH TA 15-511](#) Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 380 MAGNOLIA AVENUE EAST (File No. VB1602, Assessment No. 168801).

Sponsors: Brendmoen

Approve; no show.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016

- 11** [RLH TA 15-507](#) Deleting the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 617 MAGNOLIA AVENUE EAST (File No. J1602P, Assessment No. 168401).

Sponsors: Stark

Delete; waiver on file.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016

- 12** **RLH TA 15-517** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 1960 MINNEHAHA AVENUE EAST (File No. J1602E, Assessment No. 168301).

Sponsors: Finney

Daniel Wille & Stephanie Wille, owners; and John Paulson, Attorney, appeared.

Inspector Paula Seeley:

-Excessive Consumption fee

-Correction Notice sent Apr 27; compliance May 29 to make repairs: scraping, peeling paint; repairing garage siding; re-checked Jun 18 -no work done
-EC sent for a cost of \$120 + \$35 = \$155 (trip made for noncompliance)
-sent to Daniel and Stephanie Wille, 1960 Minnehaha Ave E

Ms. Wille:

-we called in because we share a driveway and the property next to them was vacant for 5 years - uninhabitable for humans; it had no driveway and was pitted out; could hardly get up it anymore

-basically, she poured a driveway and walked into their home and told them that she poured it on our concrete; so, we called the city with an inquiry was to how to handle this, legally, without all kinds of turmoil and neighborly dispute; just needed some guidelines

-when we made that first complaint, inspectors came out and gave them a citation for "historically existing structure that we've re-decked;" we re-roofed and had it scraped and painted 3 sides of it; the back side is missing maybe a 1 x 6 across the bottom and one piece.... the house is from 1909 and it was a structurally existing on the lot when we moved there

Ms. Moermond:

-and why is that relevant

Ms. Wille:

-because we re-decked it, re-roofed it.....

-we called because of the neighbor's encroachment; her drainage is coming off her house onto our property..... and the slab she poured it literally on our property

Ms. Moermond:

-believes that their attorney would tell them that it's a private dispute between you and your neighbor

Ms. Wille:

-but they came and gave us a citation for a fire we didn't have; for garbage and trash and construction materials, car parts, and rubbish and we didn't have it; they sent 5 people from the city, a 2-ton truck, etc.

Ms. Moermond:

-why didn't you appeal this?

Ms. Wille:

-I called the guy right away and said we didn't have a fire; the lady next door had a fire; I have pictures of it - that very day

Ms. Moermond:

-when you got the Orders, there's a statement saying you can appeal them -

Ms. Wille:

-but I called them several times and they said they were coming out for the garbage next door, not for our place

-I can't handle all this stress that they're putting on me; I'm disabled and have no money

-I'm not on the ownership

Ms. Moermond:

-Ramsey County tax records show that you are an owner of this property

Mr. Paulson:

*-the question for today is what needs to be done with the shed; they've done some scraping and painting done
-the Willes request that this assessment be dropped at this point because they have substantially complied*

Ms. Seeley:

*-there are some siding issues and the door
-she has talked with Mr. Magner, who says that this is absolutely not a carriage house; it's not an historical building
-yes, she was involved with the neighbor - there is a dispute there
-but if there's a complaint, I have to deal with it; this and the other property
-photos from Jun 18*

Ms. Moermond:

-photos taken Jun 18 show violations; that's 2 months after the original Order was issued in Apr

Ms. Seeley:

*-Inspector Smith has photos of the garage from Oct 19 and no work has been done
-all viewed the Oct 19 photos in Ms. Seeley's computer
-the house didn't have Orders on it*

Ms. Moermond

*-what's the plan to get this fixed?
-the use of that building, so far, has not come into question; the condition of the exterior is what we are talking about here today
-she is looking for a plan on how you're going to address this problem
-she would be willing to look at decreasing this assessment of eliminating it if you bring me a plan on how you're going to fix it*

Mr. Paulson:

-I think was can get a plan together

Ms. Moermond:

*-will recommend approval of this assessment unless you can bring me a plan before Jan 1, 2016 to have it dealt with in a reasonable time period
-this goes in front of the City Council Jan 20, 2016
-she will forward her information to the City Attorney handling your case*

Ms. Wille:

-we were told that we couldn't even go on that side of the property because....

Ms. Moermond:

-get the attorney's advice and have a good day

Ms. Seeley:

-noted that there are 2 forthcoming assessments for the same thing

Ms. Moermond:

-that's more reason for you to bring me a plan

Approve unless owner can bring a work plan to hearing officer before January 1, 2016.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016

13 RLH TA 15-508 Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 1086 REANEY AVENUE (File No. J1602E, Assessment No. 168301).

Sponsors: Finney

Phonetala Xiong Yang, owner, appeared.

Inspector Paula Seeley:

-Summary Abatement issued May 27, 2015; compliance Jun 2; re-checked Jun 6; Work Order sent

-sent to Tang Xiong, 1086 Reaney Ave; and Occupant

-in bold letters: remove couch from alley; furniture from rear deck and yard; remove box spring and furniture from between the garages

-no returned mail

-no history

-work crew sent out but work had been done by owner

-PAEC Excessive Consumption fee \$120 + \$35 = \$155

Ms. Yang:

-she did the clean up and after she cleaned up everything, someone else dumped a couch in her backyard and garage

-she called the city and spoke with a couple ladies, who said, "OK; but you should call the police"

-she called the police; they came and took her statement; then, he walked over to the neighbors (the couch originally belonged to him); the police said to call the city and have them come and pick it up; her assumption was that she would not get billed for it

Ms. Moermond

-evidently, the police didn't know either

-will recommend deletion

Delete.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016

14 RLH TA 15-514 Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 989 SELBY AVENUE (File No. CRT1602, Assessment No. 168201).

Sponsors: Thao

Steve Janega, owner, appeared.

Fire Supervisor Leanna Shaff:

-Fire Certificate of Occupancy fees of \$180 + \$156 service charge = \$336

-Mr. Janega returned the gold card

-appointment letters sent: 6/20/14, 6/27/14 and 7/7/14

-correction letters sent: 9/5/15, 10/22/15, 12/1/15 and 12/21/15

-billing dates: 5/11/15, a re-inspection fee was removed; re-sent it on 5/12/15 and 6/10/15

-there was returned mail during the process but that record is update in our system now

-first apt letter sent to Mr. Janega, 45th Ave S, Mpls

-second apt letter sent to owner, Jeffery Eberhardt, 45th Ave S, Mpls

-third apt letter and all subsequent letters & billings were sent to Mr. Janega, 989 Selby Ave, St. Paul

-from reading the file, it was a commercial property

-the property owner was living there; it had to go thru some zoning process to change the occupancy to a mixed use building, which has been done

Mr. Janega:

-looking for a fair price

-it's not his first fire inspection; he has been thru many

-every person he's dealt with in the inspection dept have been fine people, great people; never had a voice raised with any of them

-this inspector comes thru, does the inspection and finds a couple things - interesting one: he has a row of fire detectors; he can't afford a Certificate (personal things put me into that building); inspectors says, "Well, they can't be in view; he said, "OK; I'll do that" - inspector came back, goes upstairs; Mr. Janega said, "That's a residential area up there." Inspector says, "Well, I still have to inspect it." He gave me a few things to do- he hid the smoke detectors and still got a deficiency because he's living there; he has no choice but to live there

-he complied with everything but they said, "You can't live there for various code reasons." He asked what those were because the bldg next to him had business on the bottom and his residence it on the top. Inspector said, "You have to have 2 separate entrances." Well, I do. Inspector said, "You have to have a back exit." Again, I have. Inspector, "Send us pictures" So, I took pictures. Apparently, they did not understand that and asked that I come down and draw a schematic of the bldg. OK, I did that; now, we all good friends.

-some staff said, "You have to do this;" others said, "You have no problem at all;" I don't understand what the issue is

-they allowed me the honor of putting in a solid core door and run a wire from the top floor to the bottom floor to connect yet another smoke detector, which on the bottom floor he can't have sitting out but on the top floor, he's required to have it out

-one of the inspectors asked where the smoke detectors were and I told him that the other guy had said that he couldn't have them out, to which this inspector said, "Well, that guy doesn't know what he's talking about." Now, I'm confused and I just want to know what to do so that I'm not living on the street; I just want someone to give me a straight answer and get this done

-the final thing that came out was, "You have to be out now because you haven't filed the proper permits;" I did but the permit guy didn't talk to the fire guy and now, I get another letter and they have to do another inspection

-since Jun of last year, this has been off and on; I've spent more time down at DSI trying my best to comply and now you charge me \$355 for that privilege

Ms. Moermond:

-what's the normal cost of a C of O for mixed use bldg?

Ms. Shaff:

-\$180 2 times

-the first bill was incorrect; it had another re-inspection fee but we took that off

-we billed 2 days after the approval of the Fire C of O inspection; it had a re-inspection fee, which we decided was not correct; he would just have the normal fee of \$180; so, we pulled that bill and reprinted it for \$180 the next day; 30 days after it hadn't been paid, we sent another bill-final Notice; after that not being paid, we sent.....

Ms. Moermond:

-sounds like you've made a lot of improvements on the building

-you've got the mixed use matter squared away

-regular fee for C of O for your bldg is \$180

-thinks that you've been thru enough confusion on this

-will recommend reducing the whole bill down to \$180 payable over 2 years

Reduce from \$355 to \$180 and spread payments over 2 years.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016

- 15** **RLH TA 15-518** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 657 SHORT STREET (File No. J1602E, Assessment No. 168301).

Sponsors: Finney

Anne L. Pink, owner, appeared.

Inspector Paula Seeley:

*-Summary Abatement Order sent May 20; compliance May 26; re-checked May 26
-work done by owner prior to re-inspection Jun 4
-Excessive Consumption fee because SA indicated sink and sink cabinet on blvd
-cost: \$120 + \$35 = \$155
-no history*

Ms. Pink:

*-the letter that she received gave a certain number of days; she agrees that it was there
-everyone in her neighborhood puts things out on the blvd with a "free" sign, hoping that someone will take it
-no one took it and it stayed there over the holiday weekend
-she couldn't get anyone to help her move it; it was quite heavy
-she is 64 years old and works 2 jobs to maintain her property
-has photos
-this was a one-time deal
-she doesn't have a lot of time to deal with these things and she also has chronic auto-immune illnesses; in fact, she's been off work for 3 months without pay because of that; she wants this assessment to go away
-she finally did get rid of it; it just took her a few extra days
-she re-sodded the blvd at her own expense
-the home/yard are beautifully maintained*

Ms. Moermond:

*-one time deal
-no history
-was taken care of by the time the crew showed up
-will recommend deletion*

Delete.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016

- 16** [RLH TA 15-499](#) Deleting the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 1742 SIXTH STREET EAST (File No. VB1601, Assessment No. 168800).

Sponsors: Finney

Delete; code compliance was issued on 8/4/15 but it should have been closed earlier.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/6/2016

- 17** [RLH TA 15-503](#) Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 506 SNELLING AVENUE NORTH (File No. CRT1602, Assessment No.

168201).

Sponsors: Stark

Approve; no show.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016

- 18 [RLH TA 15-509](#) Deleting the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 556 SNELLING AVENUE NORTH (File No. J1602P, Assessment No. 168401).

Sponsors: Stark

Delete; waiver on file.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016

- 19 **RLH TA 15-512** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for Property at 905 THIRD STREET EAST (File No. VB1602, Assessment No. 168801).

Sponsors: Finney

Todd Dexheimer appeared.

Inspector Joe Yannarely:

-Registered Vacant Building fee \$2,025 + \$155 service charge = \$2,180

-has been a Cat VB since May 5, 2014

-have been 3 work orders during that time

-sale approval documented in Feb 2015

-code compliance letter issued Nov 2014

-several finalized permits

Mr. Dexheimer:

-he would be finished now but the mechanical inspector added a bunch of repair requirements without seeing the property

-his mechanical contractor is out for a week now; should all be done in 2 weeks

Ms. Moermond:

-was a waiver granted on this?

Mr. Yannarely:

-a 90-day waver was granted by Ms. Moermond Apr 29, 2015

Mr. Dexheimer:

-he had some issues with the general contractor on the job so, they had to fire him; also, had some issues with the street, too

-the building's completely finished except for what the mechanical inspector is requesting; she's requesting that we pull a permit for a new boiler, which we did not put it; the boiler was installed in 1991 but apparently, we'll need to pull a permit on it -is asking for a 1-2 month extension just to cover things

Ms. Moermond:

-your City Council Public Hearing isn't until Jan 20, 2016

-we're 3 months into the year; another 90 days will take us 6 months into the year and that's too much time to get a complete waiver for

-she wants you to pay for part of it

-she will decrease it based on how quickly you get it done

Mr. Dexheimer:

-he understands the program and the need for it; and he's fine with it but.... what irritates him...

*-he works both in Mpls and St. Paul; in Mpls, once you buy a bldg, you're not getting assessed unless you're actually not doing the work; in St. Paul, you're getting assessed whether you're doing the work or not; it's a closed case; Great! you're doing the work but here's your \$2000 fee for helping the city out
-if someone is fixing up a building, why should I get all these fees?*

Mr. Yannarely:

-not that it's a factor but we've had to babysit this property since it's been on the VB list; there's been 8 founded complaints and 3 work orders

Ms. Moermond:

-you will be more than 6 months into the year by the time it goes to Council

-she wants to decrease that fee

-she will decrease it based on how quickly you get it done

-she will not go to CC and say that you need to pay for the entire year; she will give you half or less depending on how quickly you get it done

Hearing officer may prorate VB fee based on how quickly owner can get the repairs done.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016

Special Tax Assessments - Rolls

- 20 RLH AR 15-79** Ratifying Collection of Fire Certificate of Occupancy fees billed during May 11 to June 16, 2015. (File No. CRT1602, Assessment No. 168201)
- Sponsors:** Stark
- Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016**
- 21 RLH AR 15-80** Ratifying Collection of Vacant Building Registration fees billed during February 2 to June 19, 2015. (File No. VB1602, Assessment No. 168801)
- Sponsors:** Stark
- Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016**
- 22 RLH AR 15-81** Ratifying Excessive Use of Inspection or Abatement services billed during May 22 to June 19, 2015. (File No. J1602E, Assessment No. 168301)
- Sponsors:** Stark
- Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016**
- 23 RLH AR 15-82** Ratifying Graffiti Removal services during July 9 to August 1, 2015. (File No. J1602P, Assessment No. 168401)

Sponsors: Stark

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/20/2016

11:00 a.m. Hearings

Summary Abatement Orders

- 24 [RLH SAO 15-69](#) Appeal of Sue LeFebure to a Summary Abatement Order at 1601 WILSON AVENUE.

Sponsors: Finney

Shed has been removed. Appeal withdrawn.

Withdrawn

Correction Orders

11:30 a.m. Hearings

Orders To Vacate, Condemnations and Revocations

- 25 [RLH VO 15-57](#) Appeal of Bee Vue to a Revocation of Fire Certificate of Occupancy and Order to Vacate at 107 FRONT AVENUE.

Sponsors: Brendmoen

Bee Vue, owner, appeared.

Fire Inspector Leanna Shaff:

-Fire Certificate of Occupancy Revocation/Order to Vacate dated Sep 24, 2015 by Inspector Efrayn Franquiz

-retaining walls are being appealed; they are deteriorating, cracking and sagging; photos

-inspection process started Dec 26, 2014; a Correction Notice listed some of the exterior items within the premises dating from earlier in the year in a Certificate of Occupancy inspection that weren't going to get finished; the retaining wall repairs/replacement weren't going to take place during the winter

-an approval with deficiencies was given with the expectation of compliance when the weather got better

-Mr. Vue did not comply forcing them to take enforcement action thru the Revocation of the Fire C of O

-there seems to be some discrepancy over one of the walls in the Orders; it may be long to the property next door, 103 Front (Code Enforcement also wrote Orders to 103 Front for repairing the wall)

Mr. Vue:

-he has been asking the inspector to come out there so that they can go thru and figure this out because he doesn't believe that one of those retaining walls is his; he believes that the wall retaining his property on the west side is his because it's very close to his property line (1 1/2 ft); the east wall is a little further away; his lot

description says that the width of his lot is 36 ft wide; he measured from the stake over to the other side and got 39 ft; he was trying to point that out to the inspector to say that only one of the walls belongs to him

-a surveyor came out and did a survey on one side (photos); it would cost him about \$1500-\$2000 to get the full survey

-the surveyor could not find the other marker; he looked on every corner and used a metal detector

Ms. Moermond:

-viewed Mr. Vue's photos showing the marker/stake that's very close to one wall; from that marker to the other wall is 39 ft wide (and his lot is described as being 36 ft wide)

Mr. Vue:

-talked with several people who tell him that the higher ground property has to protect the lower ground property with a retaining wall

Ms. Moermond:

-let's separate the walls and do the west wall now; she sees that there are penetrations thru the brick that look to her as though there's no drainage thru there; and that's what pushing the brick out and it won't improve with the frost and thaw cycle that's coming; it will only deteriorate it; that damage would be to your property and putting debris from the wall onto the neighbor's driveway

Mr. Vue:

-he will fix his wall on the west side up to code when we know that the next door neighbor on the east side is going to be responsible for the other wall

-right now, they are forcing my hand; I have to fix both walls or my C of O will be Revoked; and if he touches a wall that's not his, he's in trouble; so, he needs them to come to an agreement

Ms. Moermond:

-no question that you are responsible for the wall to the west and it's supporting your house

-she doesn't have a marker to look at; let's figure out a different way to settle the east side wall

-unfortunately, from the picture Mr. Vue took, it's not aligned directly where the pin is with the side of the house; it's hard for her to see if it is parallel with the house; it's askew just because of the angle of the camera; there's not enough side walk on the photo to be able to get the right angle

Mr. Vue:

-if he measures 39 ft from the marker, one of the walls can't be his; he believes that the one holding up his property is his wall and the other one is the neighbor's wall; the east wall is probably 3 1/2 - 4 ft tall going all the way back

Ms. Shaff:

-Code Enforcement did send the other guy a letter that he needs to fix the east wall

-a letter was written to 103 Front Ave by Inspector Westenhofer this last summer; it's leaning over on the side walk; in that letter, the inspector is requiring them to get a survey and to replace the wall under permit

-looks like Inspector Westenhofer closed that file on Aug 6, 2015 but she doesn't know why he closed the file

-sounds like the wall in dispute is between 103 and 107 Front; so the expectation from Inspector Franquiz is that Mr. Vue and his neighbor figure that out

Ms. Moermond:

*-wishes that Mr. Westenhofer were here to explain that
-you and your neighbor both received Orders; you will need to get a full survey in order to find the pin; the measurement has to be from the pin
-maybe you can hire a surveyor and split the cost
-let us know which survey company you used
-she is not ready to make a call on the east side wall; Mr. Vue makes a decent argument but she can't see the angle; she needs supporting documentation, especially, when it's under dispute; so, we need to have.... survey information
-this may end up being a private issue; you could sue the neighbor
-the city only cares that it gets fixed*

Ms. Shaff:

-asked Mr. Vue if he has talked with his neighbors to the east to see if they'd be willing to do a survey?

Mr. Vue:

*-yes, he did and they are not willing to do a survey but the neighbor did admit that the wall belongs to him
-unless the neighbors are also asked to come to the table, they will not do anything*

Ms. Moermond:

-reviewed aerial/plat maps; according to the city plat map, your lot is 38 ft wide, not 36 ft wide; the neighbors to your west is 36 ft wide and the neighbors to your east is 31 ft wide; this plat isn't the same thing as a survey

Mr. Vue:

-he'd appreciate it if the city would write a letter to the neighbors on each side of him, ordering them to deal with the retaining wall, so that he could approach them; because the neighbor to the east knows that it's his wall but he doesn't have any letter to say so

Ms. Moermond:

*-enforcement is stayed while we sort this out - in the appeal process; so, nothing will happen until we figure out where to go on this
-she will ask DSI to make a measurement from the pin but without the other corners of the property being marked, it's really hard to know; we need more than 1 pin; sometimes a pin is off a foot or so - these things happen; so, to protect your interest and your neighbors, more pins will make this better
-the cost to fix these walls is going to be more than \$1500, she thinks (repair situation on the west but the one on the east is completely collapse*

Mr. Vue:

-he's willing to do what's his but to do something that's not his

Ms. Moermond:

*-we will send letters and try to get everyone into the same room
-a survey will be to your advantage; it will benefit only you
-let's LAY this OVER to try to get everyone here on Nov 24, 2015; the time will be determined by the availability of the people
-she will talk with the dept head about how they want to write the Orders
-Ms. Shaff will write the letter for 111 and Ms. Moermond will write the letter for 103*

Orders will be written to 111 and 103 Front and all will be discussed at November 24th hearing.

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 11/24/2015

1:30 p.m. Hearings**Fire Certificates of Occupancy**

- 26 [RLH FCO
15-252](#) Appeal of Bill Wengler to a Re-Inspection Fire Certificate of Occupancy with Deficiencies at 857 GRAND AVENUE.
- Sponsors:** Thune
- Bill Wengler, East Mall Association, owner, appeared along with a man named Justin.*
- Ms. Moermond:*
-from her understanding, Inspector Wiese was going to go out Oct 12 and do a follow-up
- Fire Inspector Leanna Shaff:*
-actually Inspector Neis and Katie LaTourneau-Bjorge did the follow-up
-we have 3 items remaining: 1) Fire Alarm Report in Juut Salon; 2) sprinkler coverage in the missing room near register, 2nd floor; and 3) other sprinkler work in Juut Salon; expect remaining work to be done in 30 days
-unable to find the Sprinkler Report
- Mr. Wengler:*
-the contractor sent it out to me the other day; I just forgot to bring it
-brought up the invoice; scanned
-will bring in the report
- Ms. Moermond:*
-Mr. Wengler will send in a Fire Alarm Report copy; they do the kitchen twice a year and the building once a year
- Ms. Shaff:*
-as soon as you get the sign-off, we're done
- Ms. Moermond:*
-pending receipt of the fire alarm report, your appeal is granted
- Grant the appeal pending the fire alarm report's submission to DSI.*
- Referred to the City Council due back on 11/4/2015**
- 27 [RLH FCO
15-231](#) Appeal of Penelope A. Brown to a Fire Certificate of Occupancy Correction Notice at 1391 HAZELWOOD STREET.
- Sponsors:** Bostrom
- Grant the appeal for battery pack lighting to be allowed as a compliance measure for the back part of the building on all floors and this must be completed by January 1, 2016.*
- Referred to the City Council due back on 11/4/2015**
- 28 [RLH FCO
15-272](#) Appeal of Doug Kleemeier to a Fire Certificate of Occupancy Correction Notice at 1360 SELBY AVEUNE.

Sponsors: Thao

Doug Kleemeier, owner and Pat Flood, realtor, appeared.

Fire Inspector Leanna Shaff:

- Fire Certificate of Occupancy Correction Notice*
- office received a complaint Sep 24, 2015 about peeling paint and a deteriorating roof on the house*
- Inspector Robert Corey went out Sep 28 and wrote Orders: repaint exterior walls that are peeling; also, provide and maintain the roof weather tight and free from defects; gave Appellant until Nov 6 to complete the repairs*
- next C of O inspection due in Jan 2016 (C-rated bldg)*
- photos in the system*

Mr. Kleemeier:

- has economic hardships that are slowing him down*
- is looking for a deferral*
- has been trying to sell the property; he's been losing money on it for many years*
- had it painted in 2007 for \$8,000; it wasn't a great job*
- he keeps hoping to refinance; bought it high about 10 years ago; it's been going lower ever since*
- tried to sell it last summer where he could break even but he was unable to do that*
- this summer, he put it back on the market; tried to short sell it; have an offer of \$139,000; he owes \$217,000*
- he understands it needs work but is unable to put any money into it; he's behind on the mortgage and underwater; he can't fix it up*
- 1st floor is rented out; people moved out of the 2nd floor a couple months ago; even if he had 2 renters, he couldn't make the mortgage*

Mr. Flood:

- the only problem trying to market this property is the overall condition*
- it's near Concordia College but it is in such disrepair...*
- some of these short sales take a long time*
- looking at a big job - \$25,000*
- another problem with trying to sell it is that it has a common driveway, which a lot of people aren't interested in and the garage is a shared garage*
- they have approached the bank; could takes some time*
- they've had an appraisal done; it's not anywhere near what is owed against it*

Mr. Kleemeier:

- rest of the house is in pretty good shape; he's replaced the furnaces about 6 years ago; bought water heater 8 years ago; had plumbing work done last summer; has worked hard to maintain the interior; it's an old St. Paul house*
- he used to live next door; he had dreams of fixing it up but it just didn't work out*
- hoping he can sell it within a few months*

Ms. Moermond:

- it's sounds as though you are very close to property abandonment - where there isn't a solution for you*

Mr. Flood:

- he owes one mortgage on it; he's trying to do the honorable thing and resolve this rather than just walk away*

Ms. Moermond:

- the work clearly needs to be done*
- a lot of people lose their property thru tax forfeiture; it's often for a marginal amount*

of money

-here, it's the marginal cost of doing the repairs that will put this over the edge into abandonment and at the same time, the repairs need to be done; whoever is buying it is going to know...the condition and that these Orders are outstanding

-roofing can be done all year round; painting cannot

-sees a board on the front of the 2nd story is gone; she wants to see exterior holes repaired and the missing pieces of siding put in

-we can go with a longer date

-will recommend granting an extension to Jun 1, 2016 on the roof and the painting

-disclose to purchaser

Grant until June 1, 2016 for the painting and roof to come into compliance.

Referred to the City Council due back on 11/4/2015

29 [RLH FCO](#)
[15-269](#)

Appeal of Judy Hall to a Fire Inspection Correction Notice at 893 WILSON AVENUE.

Sponsors: Finney

Heather Hall, co-owner with Judy Hall, appeared.

Ms. Hall:

-she is on the deed to the house; her mother, Judy, is co-owner

-Sep 4, 2015; Quit Claim Deed filed with Ramsey Co

-has done a lot of work on this already; she can provide that documentation

-plans to do most of the work on the list but this has never been a rental property

-she bought it in 2010

-she does need to replace her HVAC system

Ms. Moermond:

-will get you out of the Certificate of Occupancy Program

-some of these Orders still need to be done: the exterior work

-you can forget the stuff on the inside

Ms. Hall:

-she has re-roofed the garage; would love to have the building re-painted but probably not until spring

-storm door-closer is broken

-wood jam came off front door

-will put on garage address numbers this month

Ms. Moermond:

Owner is released from the Fire C of O Program; however, will grant 2 months for the front door to come into compliance; grant an extension until June 1, 2016 for the exterior peeling paint; must patch any holes on the garage, if any; and owner needs to address the numbers on the garage immediately.

Referred to the City Council due back on 11/4/2015

2:30 p.m. Hearings

Vacant Building Registrations

- 30 [RLH VBR 15-27](#) Appeal of Jamie Thelen, St. Paul Old Home Plaza, LLC, to a Vacant Building Registration Renewal Notice at 370 UNIVERSITY AVENUE WEST. (To be referred back to Legislative Hearing on October 20, 2015; Council public hearing to be continued to October 21, 2015)

Sponsors: Thao

Ms. Moermond:

-this is a long-term layover

-we've been cutting them breaks on their VB fee for years

Inspector Matt Dornfeld, Vacant Buildings:

-they are turning this into condos and they are not done; it's a massive project; will be beautiful

-their VB fee is not due until Apr

-I couldn't figure out why this came up

Ms. Moermond:

-it's an appeal of the bill that was received in Apr 2015, so it's the 2015-16 fee; and we are 2/3 thru that year

-we've been using a pattern of cutting those VB fees in half but she is losing her patience with that

Mr. Dornfeld:

-the 2015-16 fee went to full assessment on Jun 3, 2015; so, it would be due again next Apr (2016-17)

-is sure that they will be appealing if they are not done

Ms. Moermond:

-let's send it thru for it's full amount; we can handle it as an assessment appeal

Mai Vang:

-a letter was sent about today's hearing

Deny the appeal.

Referred to the City Council due back on 10/21/2015

- 31 [RLH VBR 15-87](#) Appeal of Rex Hale to a Vacant Building Registration Renewal Notice at 693 DESOTO STREET.

Sponsors: Brendmoen

Rex Hale, owner, appeared.

Inspector Matt Dornfeld, Vacant Buildings:

-was made a Category 2 Vacant Building Oct 11, 2012 by Inspector Tom Friel

-Mr. Hale went thru our Sale Review process and was approved as of Mar 18, 2015

-code compliance inspection report on file

-all trade permits remain open

-has been maintained

-Vacant Building fee was due Oct 11, 2015

Mr. Hale:

-would like to be removed from the VB Program

-wants to occupy it sooner rather than later; is 95% there

-we have one outlet left for electrical

-the ducts have been cleaned by our HVAC people; they need to schedule the final on that

-plumbing: we have a stool to install

-carpet is down; a tile back splash needs to be finished up and that's it

Ms. Moermond:

-will grant a 90-day VB fee waiver; sounds like you'll have the sign-offs in 90 days

Mr. Dornfeld:

-you'll get a Certificate of Code Compliance once your permits are all completed; talk to Jim Seeger

Ms. Moermond:

Waive the VB fee for 90 days.

Referred to the City Council due back on 11/4/2015

32 [RLH VBR 15-90](#)

Appeal of John Tolo and Dave Kell to a Vacant Building Registration Fee Warning Letter Requirement at 561 EDMUND AVENUE.

Sponsors: Thao

John Tolo and Dave Kell appeared.

Inspector Matt Dornfeld, Vacant Buildings:

-has been a Category 2 Vacant Building since Oct 1, 2007; it was a commercial bar/restaurant property

-currently, there are electrical, plumbing and building permits still open

-workers are on site daily

-we had a small issue with building materials being stored on the blvd, just because there was no other space; a ROW permit was issued; the blvd has been cleared

-VB fee was due Oct 1, 2015

Mr. Tolo:

-asking for an waiver on the VB fee

-we are a nonprofit organization, part of Koinonia Minnesota; entered paperwork

-Mr. Tolo is director of the nonprofit; Mr. Kell is one of the board members

-they bought the building on Contract for Deed last year Jun 2014; began working on the purchase in Mar 2014; it took about 6 months to get thru all of the issues to get the plan approved, which pushed off their ability to work on it for quite a while

-we do things a lot like Habitat for Humanity; we've had a lot different volunteer teams

-we are almost done; they are painting the exterior

-it's a nonprofit project so things take longer than a traditional contractor project

-it was a total gut; it was in really poor condition; the building has been significantly improved; the corner looks better

-the neighbors are really happy

-they are very practically involved with helping at-risk people in the neighborhood;

that's their primary concern; they have narcotics anonymous groups; they do housing for at-risk single moms and young adults

-the building will be used as the main office for their community outreach center; they

meet with clients almost every day for many things; almost like street triage; they

work closely with the city's prosecutor's office and the police dept; they will do training and have consultations with clients

-thinks that they will probably be able to get it done in 90 days; it may take a little longer; it looks done

-still need to put in cabinets, install some fixtures, etc; 95% of the electrical is done;

plumbing is done
-haven't yet called for final permits
-they have a contractor working pro bono

Ms. Moermond:

-let's give you 90 days to finish; if you go over a bit, when you get the letter saying that the VB fee is no longer waived and it will become an assessment onto the taxes, send in the gold post card that comes with the letter, which means you want to appeal it and we can talk about adjusting the VB fee at that point

Waive the VB fee for 90 days.

Referred to the City Council due back on 11/4/2015

- 33** [RLH VBR 15-94](#) Appeal of Matt Folkerds/ Dok.LLC to a Vacant Building Registration Renewal Notice at 134 MARIA AVENUE.

Sponsors: Finney

Rescheduled per owner's request.

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 11/3/2015

- 34** [RLH VBR 15-88](#) Appeal of James Richards to a Vacant Building Registration Renewal Notice at 804 OTTAWA AVENUE.

Sponsors: Thune

James Richards, owner, appeared.

Inspector Matt Dornfeld, Vacant Buildings:

*-Inspector Dennis Senty opened up a Category 2 Vacant Building file Oct 24, 2014
-Mr. Richards was approved by our Sale Review process Jun 12, 2015
-code compliance inspection report on file
-all trades permits are open
-maintained
-VB fee was due Oct 24, 2015*

Mr. Richards:

*-electrical is done
-plumbing needs a sink trap in bathroom & kitchen, which is scheduled for tomorrow morning
-all finals should be done next week
-then, he will call Mr. Seeger*

Ms. Moermond:

Waive the VB fee for 90 days.

Referred to the City Council due back on 11/4/2015

- 35** [RLH VBR 15-93](#) Appeal of Marcus Landrum to a Vacant Building Registration Renewal Notice at 1308 VICTORIA STREET NORTH.

Sponsors: Brendmoen

Marcus Landrum, owner, appeared.

Inspector Matt Dornfeld, Vacant Buildings:

- this has been a Vacant Building since Nov 5, 2001
- a code compliance inspection was ordered in 2011
- there was some attempted rehabilitation in 2008 but has been dormant since
- the VB fee is due Oct 30, 2015
- property is in good shape; it's maintained and secure; has not been a nuisance
- can't find a new code compliance inspection report

Mr. Landrum:

- he'd love to see this property off the VB list because they live right across the street from it; we maintain it, etc.
- the electrical is fully done and checked off
- plumbing is roughed in
- the mechanical is done
- all permits were pulled and it's been checked off by the city
- my wife and I were looking to retire in this house
- he's also working on the house they are currently living in
- he's always kept it maintained
- the VB fee has gotten to the point where it's a detriment to getting things done; we don't make a lot of money yet are trying to do things these; he does all his own work except for the mechanical and plumbing

Ms. Moermond:

- full code compliance inspection done in 2001 - things have changed since then
- asked that he get a fresh code compliance inspection to get a new baseline and figure out what's reasonable

Mr. Landrum:

- a lot of the things on the old list have been done: new windows; new doors; new sewer system; new water main; new roof; new siding; etc; they've done things as funds have allowed them to
- he'd like to say that he'd be done in a year but he has a son, who goes to school in Maine, and will be for 2 more years, so. ... he can't promise anything

Ms. Moermond:

- let's LAY this OVER for 6 weeks; during that time, get a new code compliance inspection report and then, we'll work on a plan; apply for that now so we can talk about it in 6 weeks

Layover so owner can apply for a new code compliance inspection.

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 12/1/2015

36

[RLH VBR 15-92](#)

Appeal of Mervyn Hough to a Vacant Building Registration Notice at 159 WYOMING STREET EAST.

Sponsors: Thune

Mervyn and Marlou Hough, parents of the owner, Sarah Cardona, who lives in Costa Rica, appeared.

Fire Inspector Leanna Shaff:

- received a complaint Feb 18, 2015 about mold and mildew issues
- inspected by Inspector Gaulke Feb 20, 2015
- he re-inspected Mar 23, 2015 and the repairs weren't done; also, this was requiring a Fire Certificate of Occupancy inspection; he transferred it to Fire C of O Program

and sent out appointment letters Mar 27 and Apr 21
-deficiency letters are dated May 15, Jun 15, Jul 10 and Aug 3, 2015 with work not having been completed
-Revoked the C of O Aug 21, 2015 and sent to the Vacant Building Program

Inspector Matt Dornfeld, Vacant Buildings:

-Inspector Dennis Senty opened up a Category 2 VB file per that referral from Fire Inspection Dept
-Mr. Senty's notes Oct 6, 2015: documented that house was vacant; secured; Fire C of O placards posted; garage service door was open; large pile of debris in rear
-Oct 7: Mr. Senty received a call from property owner's agent; Inspector explained the appeals process and VB requirements; he instructed the agent to secure the garage; agent stated that a dumpster was being dropped off today for clean-up; he was waiting for a decision from Fire Inspection on whether he would get an interior inspection or not

Mr. Hough:

-the house was vacated Sep 21, 2015
-background: 4 years ago, there was quite a bit of work done on the house; it was inspected by plumbing, electrical, framing and heating people
-the deficiency list includes items that are mostly cosmetic; mostly related to maintenance and housekeeping type issues
-they have made efforts with the tenants to have workers come into the house but the tenant 1) had a pit bull that required it to be in a cage; and 2) she wouldn't give us a key (she had the keys changed and we didn't have access); we had to make appointments with her, which was not easy and we were not successful very often
-many of these things were related to things that she was supposed to do like cleaning the house, removing things from the hallway, pulling light bulbs into fixtures, closing windows, removing clutter, etc; the house was in a very bad state of housekeeping
-before the VB was an issue and after she had vacated the house, they had started the process of cleaning the place; lots of junk was left behind by her so we brought in a dumpster; the house has been partially cleaned; some of the deficiency list includes finishing the cleaning; painting; repairing kitchen cabinets; replace bathroom sink; install light fixtures (all are fairly minor)
-they are requesting 60 days to fix these things and have another inspection; they feel that while they were slow in responding to this obvious state of disrepair and uncleanliness, they were also dealing with a tenant, who owed a considerable amount in back rent, someone who really didn't want them coming to the house and someone, who said that she was moving, which took many months for that to happen
-when we are done, the house will be sold; it's not easy for their daughter to own this house
-they did do an inspection of the heating system; it's not on the list

Ms. Shaff:

-thinks that there's more going on than the inspection listed (photos)

Ms. Moermond:

-this tenant was beyond your control; state law says that you could change the locks back
-she doesn't see why the Appellant should get a break when this situation wasn't managed; you weren't getting in

Mr. Hough:

-he has known the tenant for 6-7 years; he used to work next to her; they talked a lot; she was a small business owner and things were OK; then, the recession hit her

hard; she made a decision to go back to school; when she finished school, she was planning to change careers but it didn't happen; now, she's back into being self-employed; the food business is better; during that time, about 1 1/2 years ago, he got a call from her son's parole officer, saying that the son was going to be moving into the house; he believes that someone in her circumstances should be cut some slack, so he allowed the son to move in but that became a problem; he believes that things weren't always this way; he happens to know that the people next door liked her (don't know about the other family members) so, he doesn't think that she was a disruptive neighbor but things were getting worse, and when she finally got a job, she needed money for a security deposit and the first month's rent and it wasn't about to happen immediately; that's why it took so long for this to happen

- they felt that they were doing a kind thing*
- he asked the inspector if they could just leave these things until after she left because it was clear that she wasn't going to have the house cleaned, even after the inspector came*
- he believes that they did the right thing and he doesn't think that the City of St. Paul was damaged by this decision on their part*

Ms. Moermond:

- will grant a 45-days to get your Fire C of O re-instated; if that doesn't happen, your VB fee will go into place and you will need to get a code compliance inspection; contact Jonathan Gaulke*
- will change it to a Category 1 VB and allow you to pull permits*

Change to VB 1; waive the VB fee for 45 days for owner to get Fire C of O re-instated.

Referred to the City Council due back on 11/4/2015