



# City of Saint Paul

15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

## Minutes - Final

### Legislative Hearings

**Marcia Moermond, Legislative Hearing Officer**  
**Mai Vang, Hearing Coordinator**  
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**651-266-8585**

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Tuesday, October 3, 2023

9:00 AM

Room 330 City Hall & Court House

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#### 9:00 a.m. Hearings

##### Special Tax Assessments

- 1     **RLH TA 23-346**     Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 606 CHARLES AVENUE. (File No. VB2401, Assessment No. 248800)

Sponsors:     Balenger

*Layover to LH December 19, 2023 at 9 am to check status of permits/CC cert.*

*[Note: Approve assessment. PO's insurance is agreeing to pay as of 10/17/23. email attached - JZ]*

*Joe Yannarely- DSI*

*Melissa Do on Behalf/Trieu Ngoc Do- Appellant*

*Moermond: Hi am I speaking with Melissa Do?*

*Do: Yes.*

*Moermond: This is Marcia Moermond at Saint Paul City Council. I am calling about the special assessment of your mother-in-law's property at 606 Charles Ave. Also, on the phone line with us we have Joe Yannarely, he's a supervisor over in the City's vacant building unit and he's going to be helping us out today. What I like to do in these cases is to start out with the staff report and have staff lay the groundwork about what the circumstances are, why we're looking at a vacant building fee renewal in this case, and just where the departments is at with your case and then talk with you about where you're at, actually where your mother-in-law is at, with getting this back in line again in kind, sort up a path forward for this looks. It looks like it's scheduled for a public hearing, January 10th of 2024. What I'm going to do is start out with that staff report from Mr. Yannarely. We'll be right back with you. Is your mother-in-law with you or are you just acting on behalf of her? How are you handling that?*

*Do: She is not with me. She currently lives with my sister-in-law, her daughter. I am the one that is taking care of all the communication from all the paperwork that she received and are also dealing with the rest for restoration company.*

*Moermond: That's super helpful. I'll turn it over to Mr. Yannarely.*

*Yannarely: We have a fire that happened there on April 18th. It automatically rolls into the vacant building program after a fire with a 90-day fire exemption. That exemption has expired, and it is now subject to the annual vacant building fee of \$2,459 and a service charge of \$157 for a total proposed assessment of \$2,616. There are open permits on building and electrical.*

*Moermond: Ms. Doe, it looks like were in the second year now in the vacant building program which isn't a surprise given that there was a fire. Those cases tend to take longer because you're dealing with insurance and the bureaucracy there. Tell me a little bit about where you're at with the rehab, when you're going to be wrapping that up and what your contractor says and so on.*

*Do: Ever since the fire happened, I dealt with insurance right away. We were unlucky to get an adjuster that was not working with myself nor the restoration company. We called her every day and left her messages every day. If she did call us back, we have issues with communication, whether it be that we could not hear her or her headset was not working, I don't know, we just couldn't communicate with her. It wasn't just myself have a hard time reaching her it was the restoration company too. We tried to reach out to her management and finally, someone return us back and then they sent us to a different adjuster. I am working with a new one right now as we speak, I just spoke with her yesterday and everything has been approved. The insurance has agreed to everything that we need to get done at the house, so things are moving. Everything was moving slow because things weren't getting approved. We couldn't do anything, unless we knew we were able to do it. As of this point, they have demolished everything in the home and right now they're waiting to do the back spray is what I understand. We are moving forward and I'm pushing them to move forward aggressively because we've been delayed so long, and the restoration company also agree with me. When we first spoke in April, the plan was to get her back in at least by October, at the latest. Right now, we're just moving forward and taking this step because they had to apply for some permit. That took a little bit because all the issues that we were having, too. But it looks like we're moving forward this week. They're supposed to do the back spray and they are already do the ruff, so that is already done. Timeline wise, we're trying to shoot before January, but I can't promise that, and I can't control that.*

*Moermond: Lot of moving pieces here. I see that it looks like there's an electrical permit that got issued back on September 8th. South Side Electric will be going in wiring and reaping throughout due to fire damage and install 12 circuits panel, miscellaneous wiring, and installations. It also looks like you're also going to probably need a plumbing permanent, and you got the building permit pulled. Question, with the insurance company, obviously there's the deductible, but for that coverage, are you needing 100% of what your available coverage is in order to pay for the restoration of the kitchen, or is there still some available? Here's where I'm going with that question is that I'm thinking that the insurance company should be covering this vacant building fee for you as a part of your claim. Sometimes people have maxed out what their insurance coverage is but given that this is a kitchen fire and not a whole house fire it may be different for you. What I'm going to say is that I would look at the insurance company and check not only this vacant building fee but to talked to them about covering thing and see what you can get out of there. If you're going to be done in January, that doesn't give me a ton of flexibility. Here is where I'm at with that is that we have the ability to prorate vacant building fees when it goes for so long but usually, we kind of set the max at 6 months and then after that require the whole fee be paid. If*

we get in the 7 months range I can work with you, but all the way to 9 months which would be what January is, that's a pretty long time. But I think that insurance is a decent option. If that doesn't work, I can also recommend that it be made payable over 5 years. If the timing on the financing is bad for it, and then that would be spread like over 5 years' worth of property taxes, so that's much smaller bites. I think that we should probably connect in a couple of months and see where things are at. This will give you a chance to talk with the insurance company and we can figure out what would be most useful for your circumstances right before you head into your public hearing, and if you need to talk to the Council, does that sound OK?

Do: Great. Can I just recap to make sure I understand everything and if I have any concern?

Moermond: Sure, and we can send you an e-mail as well. Go ahead and recap.

Do: From my understanding is there's the speed because there's a vacant building that my mother-in-law who we should have the insurance cover this? I'm going to try to shoot for that because obviously this was delayed because of insurance. It's either have insurers pay or have her pay over 5 years in her property taxes.

Moermond: If she wants to do it that way, she can also have it come forward just as one assessment and pay up that way. If that's her preference, she doesn't have to pay overtime. But if she's feeling strapped because of all of a thing going on financially we could do that. What we can send you, just so you have it for talking to the insurance company, we'll send you the vacant building registration that went out, so you've got the original paperwork and the warning letter and then we can send you the page from the City's special tax assessment roll that has the this property listed on it and the amount of money so that you can use that as documentation for getting them to pay and see if that helps.

Do: That sounds great. When you say the public hearing on January 10th, is that the same day that you want to talk to me talk before that?

Moermond: Let's talk before that because that's when the City Council looks at that. I neglected to say at the beginning that what I'm going to be doing is just giving a recommendation, and if you're OK with what that is, they're going to go with it. But if you're not okay with what it is, which is fine, there's that public hearing there to give you a chance to talk to them by phone, or in person and writing. They may look at it differently than I do. I was hoping to have more or less finish with our conversations that it would be up to date going in front of them. I'm thinking that we have our tax assessment hearings on December 19th, so that's the closest that I can put it on. Does that work for you on December 19th at 09:00AM?

Do: I can make it work.

Moermond: I'm sorry. It's just another thing and we'll try to be quick about it. We'll put that on our calendar, and we'll send you a follow-up e-mail with attachments that will help you with the insurance company and you have one last question.

Do: After I talked to insurance should I be contacting you back to tell you that insurance will cover, or should I wait for Dec. 19th?

Moermond: That is completely with you and the insurance company, if the insurance company says that they're going to cover it, then we can skip the hearing. You reply to

*the email that we sent you and just say insurance will be covering this. You can pay it with the money that they send you or they can pay it, whatever works best. We have a plan you have your hands full helping your mother-in-law. I do hope that things move smoothly from out how getting her back in her home. If you have any questions, please reach back out.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 1/17/2024**

- 2 [RLH TA 23-342](#) Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 276 EXCHANGE STREET SOUTH. (File No. VB2401, Assessment No. 248800)

**Sponsors:** Noecker

*Layover to LH December 5, 2023 at 9 am to check status of permits/CC cert.*

*Inda Streed- Appellant  
Joe Yannarely- DSI*

*VM: Moermond: Good morning. I'm trying to reach Inda Streed. This is Marcia Moermond at the Saint Paul City Council. I'm calling about the vacant building assessment appeal you have for 276 Exchange streets. We will try reaching back to you in a few minutes and see if you are available. Thank you.*

*Moermond: Good morning, is this Inda Streed? This is Marcia Moermond and I'm calling again about that vacant building fee appeal and also the phone line with us we have Mr. Joe Yannarely. He is a supervisor at the vacant building unit over at the City's Department of Safety and Inspections and he'll be helping us out today. My job is to hear your appeal of this fee, and I need to develop a recommendation for the Council to consider. I'm giving them a recommendation, if you're OK with what that is, they'll be going with that. But if for any reason you're not okay with what I'm recommending to them, you can definitely testify in writing by phone or in person and they can look at it differently than I do. What I like to do in this setting is to start out with a staff report and have staff put on the record what the conditions are, how we end up with the property in the vacant building program and then fee, and then talk with you about what you're looking for today in the appeals process and we'll see if we can come to a conclusion.*

*Yannarely: Yes, this is just the annual vacant building fee for the property. It is up prospective in nature, so it goes forward. It entered the vacant building program in May 11th of 2021 and the annual fee is \$2,459 with a service charge of \$157 for a total proposed assessment of \$2,616.*

*Moermond: when you said prospective vacant building fee you mean this vacant building fee covers?*

*Yannarely: May 23 to May 24.*

*Moermond: Ms. Streed you folks are appealing this vacant building fee. Can you tell me why and what you're looking for today?*

*Streed: We've been doing some work in the building, and eventually we plan to open it. We have started the project around the summer here. We got the approval for the exterior from HPC. We had the hearing on the 25th of September, and they approved it. We are doing some work.*

*Moermond: That's good. When do you anticipate you're going to have that work done?*

*Streed: I need to check the timetable with the team, with the contractors. We did see the tree removal last week. I cannot give you the details right now. But I can send our plans when I have documents from the team who was working on that.*

*Moermond: Honestly, I don't I don't need the plan. I was looking at or just kind of a general timeline that you are working with. Here's where I'm coming from with the question is that right now I've got a vacant building fee that I'm looking at that is for that May to May time period, which means that we are pretty much 6 months into the year and by the time it hits City Council it's going to look like 7 months in the vacant building program, and that's on January 10th, actually 9 months. When do you t think you're going to be done is going to inform whether I would recommend that the fee gets prorated and if you are going to be done much sooner than later, I could make a recommendation that they prorate the fee. Like if you are going to be done next week, I could easily recommend that the fee be like 5 out of the 12 months billed our next month, 6 out of the 12 months billed. But if looking at it being a lot longer, it gets harder and harder for me to prorate generally. I can't do that reasonably if it's like 7 or more months. Looking at that, then you're like in for the majority of the year. This is not the first time in the vacant building program. I know that you guys have a struggle going on. I'm just looking for that kind of endgame on when you're going to have that. I think what I should do is check on your situation in like 6 weeks, 8 weeks and see how you're doing and see if you're a good candidate to get your fee prorated. I can't see where I would recommend that it would go away. Obviously, the council could look at that differently but for my purposes, I don't think I can under the code to make that recommendation. Anyway, what do you think about a hearing in 8 weeks to kind of see where you're at and then based on where you're at, I can make my recommendation.*

*Streed: What you're saying is that if it could be prorated so we would need to still pay between May of 2023 until we finish the project.*

*Moermond: Right now, if you are to finish very, very quickly, like within a month or 6 weeks, I would say I could recommend that gets cut in half. I could reasonably do that up to the point that it's been in the program for 7 months after that, I'm hard pressed to recommend that it gets decreased. I was thinking why not look at it at the 7-month mark. So, 7 out of 12, the billable months would have happened. I could use that to inform my recommendation to the Council about whether it should be prorated, so you would have that information in advance of the public hearing. I don't know what your company's timeline is, but that would at least give them some information.*

*Streed: Even though we're doing some work in the building, you still were charged that. Like I inform you before we started in the summer of last year with a plan to open before the holiday.*

*Moermond: Yeah, it's not based on whether or not you have permits pulled. The vacant building fee applies to buildings like yours that are empty and haven't been put to use, have some code violations. In your case, it looks like there is a fair number of violations in terms of squatters, not shoveling, garbage, getting work orders. Those things are not great in terms of saying that you're on top of managing the property. What happens is that the vacant building inspectors are observing those things and needing to write them up. That's really why we have the vacant building program is to make sure that buildings are maintained safely for and the community in general that*

*that's what it pays for. It doesn't connect back to the building permit. The building permit does say, hey, we're working to get out of it. I would like to use that to inform my recommendation. But really I'm looking for those building permits to be final and use that as a measure. I'm happy to look at it December 5th and just kind of see where you're at. If you are done, and if you are look at prorating it but otherwise, I'm going to recommend approval of the whole thing.*

*Streed: Okay. So by December 5th what if it's done?*

*Moermond: I would look at it in cutting it in half. If it's not done there is no assistance on that matter, and I have no idea whether that is possible. What were you saying?*

*Streed: Yeah, because like I said, we had the time but then we need the approval form the Historic Home Consul, so it got delay. Sometimes this kind of things happened especially since this is a historic building. We're trying to make our timeline but it's difficult when it's really out of our control.*

*Moermond: I look at what you're saying, and I see that you have a vacant building registration back in 2019, and you had one again in 2021. This is not your first rodeo trying to deal with this stuff. I'm less inclined to be sympathetic of the bureaucratic process that needs to be engaged. This building has been in this situation for a while. These bureaucratic necessities like the Heritage Preservation Review shouldn't come as a surprise to us. Anyway, that's where I'm at with it the Council could look at it very differently than how I am, and that's completely possible. It's hard for me to tell exactly where the HPC stuff was at. I can see that there was an approval on September 27th but I'm struggling to find the application date for when things went into the program when your application is made. It looks like the value of the project you listed was just \$2500. That's what I know and we will chat with you than in December and see how things are looking and hopefully there's been a substantial amount of progress in the interim.*

*Streed: I don't know how much they file for the HPC, but we did major renovation in the building because it was going to take a lot of stuff. I hope by December 5th we see the progress. Meanwhile, do you need anything from me?*

*Moermond: I don't you don't need to worry about that. We can just check what's in the computer system then on December 5th. Don't feel like you need to update us on that in the interim.*

*Streed: Okay, and then what happen if we finish before the public date? Is there anything that I need to send you to inform you that we are done?*

*Moermond: No, we would be able to see in the computer system that the permits have been final. That would be the documentation were looking, so that wouldn't be something you need to worry about sending us.*

*Streed: who will be responsible to supplement that permit? Would that be the construction company that we hire?*

*Moermond: Whoever is doing the work is responsible for making an application for a building permit. I imagine you've hired a professional contractor who is familiar with this sort of thing. I can see that you have Reprise Design who were hired to prepare plans that went in the front of the HPC. You have an electrical contractor Live Wire Electrical Services and they're the ones who applied for the electrical permit. I would look for your contractors to do that work.*

*Streed: I will talk to our contractors to get it done because otherwise they will miss.*

*Moermond: I do wish you well getting this done sooner than later. We will talk again and a couple of months.*

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 12/5/2023**

**3 RLH TA 23-347 Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 820 WHITE BEAR AVENUE NORTH. (File No. VB2401, Assessment No. 248800)**

**Sponsors:** Prince

*Delete the assessment.*

*Joe Yannarely- DSI  
Hamsa Miridi- Appellant*

*Moermond: Good morning is this Hamza Muridi? This is Marcia Moermond at the Saint Paul City Council.*

*Muridi: Yes.*

*Moermond: I am calling about the vacant building fee that you've appealed for 820 N White Bear Ave, and on the phone line with us we have Joe Yannarely, he's a supervisor in the vacant building unit at City's Department of Safety and Inspections. Mr. Muridi, my job is to hear your appeal, and I need to make a recommendation to the City Council on it. If you're OK with what it is great, they're going to go with it, and if for any reason you're not okay there is a public hearing you can submit additional testimony, testify over the phone or in person and they can take a look at it differently than I do. I have to say that City bureaucracy wise you have a complicated situation, so that staff report will be super helpful. I have a notion of where we're headed with this but really need to talk to you about your plans, but I will have Mr. Yannarely really give us a backwards look, and then I'd love to talk to you about what that forward look.*

*Yannarely: This was in the vacant building program on an annual basis from May 4th of this year until July 27th of this year. In the calendar year for this year, it was in the program for just under 90 days when all of their permits were finalized. It does appear to Inspector Dornfeld that they were moving in and occupying the space. We closed a vacant building file and Mr. Dornfeld recommended that Mr. Muridi apply for a certificate of occupancy of some sort. The cost of the vacant building fee for a year is \$2,459 with the service charge of \$157 for total proposed assessment of \$2,616.*

*Moermond: This was confusing, I think in part because the Fire CFO program is involved as well. What did we learn from them if anything?*

*Yannarely: Ms. Zimny, do you have something from Mr. Perucca that he's stated about this?*

*Moermond: I think there's an email on the record saying that an inspector was out there, but the space seems to be unoccupied right now.*

*Muridi: Yes, I was the one who actually called after we bought the building February 24th, and when I received the letter finding is when I found out that the building was a*

*vacant and that's when I reached out to Matt and Matt connected me with Laura. I was the one who actually call to get it out. Even with the fee, I sent it out to the previous owners, and I looked at the dates and most of those dates we didn't own it, so I forward the fee right away to the previous owner because we bought the building on a contract for Deed. They're fully aware that there was a fee prior to buying it.*

*Moermond: When you say the previous owner, do you mean a Shrizad Marimi?*

*Muridi: Yes.*

*Moermond: Can you tell me where you're at with like what you're going to be doing with the building and when you anticipate that's going to be happening?*

*Muridi: Yes, I was telling Laura that we have tenants. Downstairs is going to be a print shop that we're going to use for, and upstairs is going to be like a African clothing and bags store and then we're going to be using the space on the weekends for like birthday parties. They understand because I walked it with Laura about the max capacity, and I personally told them there can only be like 40 people in there and Laura said that its 49 because there's only one exit, but I would love to just get an occupancy for like 40 to 45 max.*

*Moermond: So downstairs, you're thinking about print shop, did you say?*

*Muridi: Yeah, downstairs is a print shop. There would only be 2 employees.*

*Moermond: Upstairs I heard you say African clothing and bags, so like a retail use.*

*Muridi: It's more like a galleria. I will say honestly, its like a rare African pictures she wants to put in there and all that. It's what she described to us. You know, okay, interesting. Almost like a galleria type and wants to use the space to host events. Like for people to come and look at the pictures, the custom handmade bags and all that. I want to say private but more like a galleria.*

*Moermond: When do you have them moving in, these different tenants?*

*Muridi: The print shop is owned by a close friend of ours, so, they move in and upstairs they haven't moved in fully yet, it's still empty. We were not aware of the whole vacant building. I got a letter and I reached out to Matt right away.*

*Moermond: What you're telling me is super useful in trying to problem solve where we need to go from here. Let me put your mind at ease, first of all, with the vacant building fee. It's our practice to waive them for 90 days, if you would have appeal early on. I'm looking at a situation where you were in the program for just under 90 days. You clearly have active plans and we're trying to work with fire CFO to get that certificate in place. I don't have any qualms at all about recommending to the Council that the fee gets deleted. Now, the next thing we're dealing with is getting you that fire CFO, so that you can move your tenants in and what I think the best move is, and I say this because Laura Husby, who was the inspector, I got hired away from us by the State Fire Marshal's office.*

*Muridi: So, Laura is not with you guys no more?*

*Moermond: Right, just within the last 60 days, I would say at the most.*



*Muridi: I'm so glad you told me that because we were so worried because she said that she was going to send an e-mail and a letter and it went ghost.*

*Moermond: Right, that's what happen there. I think that honestly, just with all of the files shuffling and everything it got a little bit turned around. Her supervisor, and that's who I'm going to suggest to reach out to, is a guy by the name of James Perucca and his last name is spelled PERUCCA. We can send you an email with that information. He's the supervisor for commercial inspections and he'll be able to either himself or sign a different commercial inspector. It sounds like you are ready to go, you have your proposed uses. They can inspect based on those uses and that everything seems to be in order as it possibly could be at this point, so that's your next stop.*

*Muridi: Downstairs, we see the certificate of occupancy, so we're like OK. That's when he started moving this stuff and everything in and then that's when we found out about the vacant building.*

*Moermond: That will be my suggestion there. During the course of today, I'll try to reach out to Mr. Perucca and just to let him know that you'll be calling to set something up.*

*Muridi: Thank you very much. We have both leases in place but they had not moved in because we've been trying to get it figured out all the way.*

*Moermond: We have a plan the vacant building fee is going away and we are getting you connected to the commercial inspection supervisor. I wish you well in getting these businesses in and hope everybody thrives, and things go.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 1/10/2024**

### 10:00 a.m. Hearings

- 4 RLH TA 23-332** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 703 CASE AVENUE. (File No. J2401E, Assessment No. 248300)

**Sponsors:** Yang

*Delete the assessment.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 1/10/2024**

- 5 RLH TA 23-333** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 703 CASE AVENUE. (File No. J2402A, Assessment No. 248501)

**Sponsors:** Yang

*Layover to LH October 17, 2023 at 10 am (hearing was not conducted).*

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 10/17/2023**

- 6 RLH TA 23-341** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1406 CLEVELAND AVENUE SOUTH. (File No. J2401E, Assessment No. 248300)

Sponsors: Tolbert

*Delete the assessment.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 1/10/2024**

- 7      **RLH TA 23-328**      Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1937 LAUREL AVENUE. (File No. J2401E, Assessment No. 248300)

Sponsors: Jalali

*Delete the assessment.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 1/10/2024**

- 8      **RLH TA 23-325**      Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 340 LAWSON AVENUE EAST. (File No. J2401E, Assessment No. 248300)

Sponsors: Brendmoen

*Delete the assessment.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 1/10/2024**

- 9      **RLH TA 23-350**      Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1648 MCLEAN AVENUE. (File No. J2401E, Assessment No. 248300)

Sponsors: Prince

*Approve the assessment.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 1/10/2024**

- 10     **RLH TA 23-344**      Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1235 MINNEHAHA AVENUE EAST. (File No. J2401E, Assessment No. 248300)

Sponsors: Yang

*Delete the assessment.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 1/10/2024**

- 11     [RLH TA 23-345](#)      Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1235 MINNEHAHA AVENUE EAST. (File No. VB2401, Assessment No. 248800)

Sponsors: Yang

*Layover to LH December 19, 2023 at 9 am to check status of permits/CC cert.*

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 12/19/2023**

- 12     **RLH TA 23-316**      Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 116

SYCAMORE STREET EAST. (File No. J2402A, Assessment No. 248501)

**Sponsors:** Brendmoen

*Approve the assessment.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 1/17/2024**

**13** [RLH TA 23-315](#)

Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 556 WHEELLOCK PARKWAY EAST. (File No. CRT2310, Assessment No. 238209)

**Sponsors:** Brendmoen

*Reduce assessment from \$396 to \$324.*

*Mitch Imbertson- DSI*

*Scott Robertson, Appellant appeared via phone*

*Nicole Alli (Wife), Appellant appeared via phone*

*Moermond: Good morning, Scott Robertson. This is Marcia Moermond at the Saint Paul City Council. I'm calling you about fire Certificate of Occupancy that it looks like you're appealing. Does that sound right?*

*Robertson: I'm not appealing the certificate of occupancy fee or any of that is just the late fee or anything related to that.*

*Moermond: We will tackle that in a second. On the phone line with us, we have Mitch Imbertson, he is the supervisor at fire inspections and will be helping us out today. I should tell you, Mr. Robertson I am the Council's hearing officer and it's my job to develop a recommendation on your appeal for Council Consideration. It's a recommendation if you're OK with what it is, they're going to go with that without discussion. But if for any reason you're not okay with what I'm recommending, you can definitely submit additional information, signed up to testify over the phone or come in person. Mr. Imbertson I will ask to start us out with the staff report and talk about why we're looking at the bill we are today that's turned into an assessment. I just want to talk to you more about your appeal. It sounds like you're talking about the service charge. We can tackle that after Mr. Imbertson gives us a little bit more background.*

*Robertson: Perfect and on the phone with me as well is my wife, Nicole Alli.*

*Moermond: Mr. Imbertson, what do you have?*

*Imbertson: This is a residential building in our Fire Certificate of Occupancy Program. Looks like it was up for a renewal inspection and the inspector had mailed out an appointment letter 2/24/2023. She was out there for the inspection 3/13/2023 and was able to get into the property and assuming that the letter was received, they had notice of the appointment. It appears she was able to get in the property and it would have gone to billing after getting approved. It was charged the base fee which covers property being approved right away without multiple re-inspections. It looks like at that point it goes to billing and it appears that the bills went to the same address we would have on file. But the appointment letter was bounced back to us and unless we're notified that there was an address change or get letter bouncing back to us as returned mail. We wouldn't have any reason to look into it at that point so it would just*

*be an automated billing process.*

*Robertson: We had a PO Box up until that time which we canceled in January. I'm guessing that was sent to a PO Box and at that time they were still forwarding it, because the certificate of occupancy did show up in our physical mailbox at our house but that's the last thing we received. I'm not a guy who doesn't pay a bill.*

*Imbertson: I believe the certificate would have been addressed to the address we had on file at that time, which would have been the PO Box. If you are receiving that at a different address, assuming that it was getting forwarded by the Postal Service without our knowledge. If we get returned mail, our standard practice would be to look into that and try to contact you to see why we're getting them returned. But if there's a new address, we need to have on record, and if we're not hearing anything and not getting the letters returned, we have no way to know that there's anything to be looking into.*

*Alli: Same for us. We didn't receive the letter and we didn't know it was an issue until we got the letter. We called right away when we got this and they said that our current home address is on file, but that bill went out to the PO Box, which obviously we no longer had.*

*Moermond: There are two addresses that the City maintains for properties like yours that are non-owner occupied, there would be potentially 3 addresses come to think of it. The records that Ramsey County maintains, and Ramsey County is going to have the tax payer of record and their information. It's going to have the fee owner which may or may not be the tax owner. Like if somebody is buying in on the contract for deed. The City would also maintain an address and contact information for the Fire Certificate of Occupancy, responsible party. That may or may not be the owner could be a property manager, so when they do the appointment letters and the bills, they send it to who they have as the responsible party, that may or may not be the owner. It appears that's where the glitch is. The information was always correct. The assessment always goes to the tax owner. I think it was that mismatch that kind of trip things up, timing wise.*

*Alli: It does because I also made sure to update the property tax form. We just assume that our new address was being changed everywhere. I didn't realize that we had to update our addresses in different locations for Ramsey County. We weren't made aware until my husband called in and they told us that there's all these different places that we have to let them know about the change of address.*

*Moermond: It looks like you're 2023 property tax statement did go to your street address in Hugo, and you're 2022 property tax statement went to your PO Box in Hugo.*

*Alli: When I made the payments, I did the change of address on the back or whatever.*

*Moermond: How long have you own this property?*

*Alli: Since 2013.*

*Moermond: Do you own other properties?*

*Alli: Yeah, we own one more at Minnehaha in Saint Paul.*

*Moermond: So, the same thing applies to that one. You want to make sure that your forms a filled out correctly for the fire inspections, folks.*

Alli: I do think when we called on this, we asked them about this all along. She said that she made sure that our address was change in the system. I believe that it did because everything has been coming to our home address. We can talk to them again to make sure.

Robertson: We were thinking we were going to have an inspection date somewhere in the near future. I haven't received anything.

Moermond: The address is correct for the fire inspections on Minnehaha, and it does indicate that a renewal is due for your property right now and that it was due as of April of 23. I'm thinking that. They're probably just backed up on inspections. I know that they've had some staff turnover. Is that where you guys are at, Mr. Imbertson?

Imbertson: Yeah. That would be accurate, the certificates don't necessarily expire like a license, or something would expire at a certain date. The renewal date, the earliest we can schedule it and depending on staffing for certain areas may be weeks or months in some cases after the renewal date before we're getting that schedule.

Moermond: I'm going to split this down the middle. The City did its best effort and an honest effort to send it the Fire Certificate of Occupancy, responsible party. I can understand that this has been a learning experience for you. I will split that service charge and take you from \$396 to \$324 for right now. If you want to look for more, the Council may look into something different than that but that will be my recommendation.

Robertson: What do you need from me going forward?

Moermond: Your public hearing looks like it's scheduled for October 11, so this would have been kind of a late appeal coming in, and that's next Wednesday. If you're wanting to testify, you need to sign up by Tuesday, noon if you want to go by phone. You can come in person, you could send an email. If you want to contest, if you're going to let it go through then in a week or 2 of that public hearing you will get an invoice in the mail and pay it or it will rule onto your 2023 for property taxes. You can pay that online or wait for the invoice. The amount won't change until after the Council votes. I'm sorry. I didn't have a better answer for you today.

**Referred to the City Council due back on 10/11/2023**

### Special Tax Assessments - ROLLS

- 14 RLH AR 23-84** Ratifying the assessments for Collection of Vacant Building Registration fees billed during July 7, 2022 to April 19, 2023. (File No. VB2401, Assessment No. 248800)

Sponsors: Brendmoen

**Referred to the City Council due back on 1/10/2024**

- 15 RLH AR 23-85** Ratifying the assessments for Securing and/or Emergency Boarding services during May 2023. (File No. J2401B, Assessment No. 248100)

Sponsors: Brendmoen

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/10/2024

- 16 **RLH AR 23-86** Ratifying the assessments for Excessive Use of Inspection or Abatement services during March 22 to April 21, 2023. (File No. J2401E, Assessment No. 248300)

Sponsors: Brendmoen

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/10/2024

- 17 **RLH AR 23-87** Ratifying the assessments for Graffiti Removal services during May 8 to June 8, 2023. (File No. J2401P, Assessment No. 248400)

Sponsors: Brendmoen

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/10/2024

## 11:00 a.m. Hearings

### Summary & Vehicle Abatement Orders

- 18 [RLH SAO 23-40](#) Appeal of Jesse Rosillo, III to Summary and Vehicle Abatement Orders at 0 ISABEL STREET EAST (PIN: 08-28-22-21-0085).

Sponsors: Noecker

*Grant to November 3, 2023 for compliance with both VAO and SAO.*

*Jesse Rosillo- Appellant  
Richard Kedrowski- DSI*

*Moermond: Is this Mr. Jesse Rosillo? This is Marcia Moermond at Saint Paul City Council. I'm calling about your appeal for orders at 0 Isabelle. On the phone line with us we have Mr. Richard Kedrowski, he is a supervisor and code enforcement over at the City's Department of Safety and Inspections and he'll be helping us out. Mr. Rosillo, my job is to hear your appeal and develop a recommendation for the Council to consider. It's a recommendation. If you are OK with what it is, they're going to go with that without discussion, if for any reason you're not okay with what I'm recommending to them you can definitely submit additional information by testifying and they could look at it differently than I do. What I like to do in this setting is to start out with the staff report. Staff will describe the conditions and why they wrote the orders that they did and then talk with you about why you're appealing those orders. What you're looking for, the appeals process, and we'll see if we can arrive at a conclusion. With your permission, I'll turn it over to Mr. Kedrowski to get us going and we'll be right back with you.*

*Kedrowski: The Code Enforcement Department received a complaint of a camper, a utility trailer with a mower and vehicles as well as debris out of a vacant lot recognized as 0 Isabel Street East. I personally went to the site and wrote a vehicle abatement order for the camper being the largest object that was on there and for the trash and then structure that was forming around the property after writing those orders before enforcement can take place and the appeal was file.*

*Moermond: We have both a vehicle abatement order and a summary abatement order. The vehicle is obviously the trailer and the summary abatement order covers all the other stuff on the parcel, and just to be clear, 0 Isabel as I'm looking at this is sort of north of the corner of Isabel and Dunedin Terrace, kind of abutting the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.*

*Kedrowski: That is correct.*

*Moermond: Mr. Rosillo, tell me a little bit about why you're appealing and what you're looking for today.*

*Rosillo: The trailer that is in there, that is my camper trailer park because I was living in Saint Peter Minnesota at the time, and I was coming here. I have my tools in there and everything. I was cutting down all the brushes and stuff. I've been trying to clean it up as best as I could, so I could put a privacy fence up and do something with the property to either put a garage in it or a pole barn. It's on a dead end over here by the railroad tracks. There's a lot of homeless people here, and every time I come there, I kick homeless people out of there and every time I try to call the cops, they're already gone. I had my trailer here, but they stole the tabs. When I came there someone that broke in and broke my windows and they were living in the trailer. I got my trailer all my windows were broken with graffiti on it. I was just about to move it and saw there were 2 tires that were punctured and the hitch was broken. I mean, it's my trailer on there the tabs were current when I put them on there, however, it looks like someone stole them. When I went to the DMV last week, they told me you already have tabs and I told them that they are not on my trailer so can I get a duplicate. That's what I did, and I put them back on. I need more time to get all the stumps out of here. I did a survey and called Gopher State because I wanted to put up a fence. Then the snow came in last year right away and it was really heavy. I'm trying to improve the property I'm not trying to make it look like an eyesore. At the moment, I don't know who was here at the time, but they actually help me clean it at the time by cutting the trees down. Every time I come here, there's someone there and that's why I need to put a privacy fence and I would like to keep the trailer here if I could.*

*Moermond: What equipment is on site related to stump and tree removal?*

*Rosillo: Well, I had my stump grinder, but I have it at my friend's house now. I have the trailer here so that I could store like chainsaws inside there and all that stuff like that. I did a lot of work over here. I mean, I've been doing this over the years but I'm finally cleaning it all up because every time I come here there are people throwing trash, wood, and other stuff, so I got to put a fence up otherwise, it's going to keep getting messy. It's kitty corner from the school, so I don't want it to keep looking bad it looks really nice now. I did the best I could all the way up to today I was still tearing stuff down and doing whatever. If you come look at it now it's improved by about, I would say about 85-90%. There's like a more wood back there but I think I can have that burn back there. I need more time to get the project that I was doing. I don't want problems with the City or nothing. I just need a fence up so I can improve this property. I already know the zoning. I did all that before and I need to get it improved and end up selling it, because it's an investment. There is a homeless problem and I don't know what to do there. Every time I come here there is trash and it's ridiculous. It's kitty corner from the schools so I get upset I have to clean it so I do the best I can I've been doing it for years.*

*Moermond: I'm thinking that cleaning up the trash on the site isn't nearly as important*

being next to school as people breaking into the trailer, living there and setting up temporary shelter. That would be a behavioral problem that would be more impactful on students than trash. Setting that aside, I'm hearing an argument that you want to keep the equipment there to continue to clean up the site. I don't know how we can keep some equipment there without having the problem recreate itself. You get rid of the tarps and the things that the unsheltered folks are bringing with them are setting up there. That trailer is, I guess, what we would call an attractive nuisance. It's been a magnet for other kinds of problems. I'm looking for an end game, getting that off the property. What is your plan right now in terms of wrapping up on the work you're talking about?

*Rosillo:* I have a stump grinder. I was going to stump out as much as I could, and then I was going to get a bobcat and tear up the ground and kind of level it out. I've been doing everything myself, me and my friend. I'm going through a breakup right now, so I'm in the city more and I can do all this. I'm trying, but the point is I've had this trailer here for 2 years and it just started because these homeless people are getting moved. The little kids vandalize and broke the window it wasn't the homeless people. I caught the kids' breaking windows and I chased them out. Some kids broke the windows and I've seen them do it and then they try to deny it. It was kids that did it, not the homeless people. It has nothing to do with the homeless. The thing is the trailer has been here for years and all sudden it's a nuisance, which it really isn't. It's a piece of my property that I bought so I can put my personal property here. Every time the City moves the homeless, they go wherever we are. I come and check, and I ask them if they can please leave. They do it right away but there's people who throw trash here, and that's nothing to do with the trailer. I need the trailer here so I can do what I got to do. I plan on paving it out and putting my boat and my trailer here and stuff like that and my work equipment.

*Moermond:* The zoning is I1-RC4 so could you construct structures under permit on that property? Absolutely. Right now, what I'm looking at is a vacant parcel and under code I don't have any actual use for that property. If you don't have a primary structure, such as a residence or business building, you can't have an accessory structure or use, which a garage, shed or trailer storage would be. It sounds like what you want to establish is storage building and storage is an actual use. You could definitely do that down the road, but you need to do that by way of first establishing a primary use. I need you to find someplace else for storage and want to give you a reasonable length of time to find an alternative location to store the equipment. I'm going to recommend to the Council that the current situation isn't an acceptable. It is attracting, like you mentioned, the homeless and kids, who break in and create nuisances by way of trash, throwing things, and behaviors at night, all of these things are not great. It's not just the trailer there it's you've got you've got a lot of stuff going on. I'm going to recommend that you reach out to the City's Homeless Assistance Response Team (HART) and they may have some help. If you're experiencing people coming like if there's another location nearby, that there was an encampment and the City is closing it down and trying to get people into other kinds of shelter and they come to your spot to your parcel instead of going to an actual shelter that might be something that the Hart program folks could help with. We can definitely email or share that information with you. I don't have updated information from code enforcement on the reported 85% improvement. Today is October 3rd and I think it would be reasonable that the items listed in the summary abatement order and the vehicle abatement order be removed from the lot by November 3rd. I'm looking at November 3rd, giving you a month to deal with relocating things and getting the site all cleaned up. I feel like that's a generous chunk of time. The Council could look at it and say that you should get more time. We'll put this in front of them October 18th and we'll send you a letter confirming that



date. If you want to present information that they should give you more time, that would be something you could do there, or you can go with that date and work with the inspectors on that. We'll get you the information on HART, they may be of assistance to you and fencing, and putting a structure on there. You need to undertake that before you can have the storage happening there.

*Rosillo: What is it November 3rd or October 18th?*

*Moermond: November 3rd is what I'm proposing to the City Council as a deadline for you finishing the orders, but we'll put it in front of City Council for a public hearing on October 18th. That would be your opportunity to ask the City Council for a different deadline than November 3rd, if that's what you wanted.*

*Rosillo: You can have the inspector come and look and see what I've ready, he would be impressed. Thing is, my tires are punctured and my trailer is lifted, it's broken now. I am tight on money right now, plus I just got a new heart failure, and I've been doing this stuff myself, and having high blood pressure and stuff like that. I've been going through it last month. I always come down and clean up and just clean up, however, I have been going through some stuff like that, personal stuff. I've been down here doing whatever I can. I have a trailer full of stuff just removed out of here and all that, it really looks nice. I'm trying my hardest and right now I have a lot of stuff going on. I am doing my best to get that done.*

*Moermond: I tell you what, if you decide to come or if the Council decided they want more information I'm going to ask if code enforcement can swing by your property on October 16th or 17th, so that when the public hearing is on the 18th that they have fresh photos to look at and they can see all the work that you've done. Take care of yourself*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 10/18/2023**

## Correction Orders

- 19 [RLH CO 23-12](#) Appeal of Peyton Hurst to a Correction Notice at 823 ENGLEWOOD AVENUE.

**Sponsors:** Balenger

*Layover to LH October 10, 2023 at 11 am (unable to reach PO).*

*Richard Kedrowski- DSI  
Peyton Hurst- Appellant*

*Voicemail: Good afternoon Mr. Hurst, Marcia Moermond for orders at 823 Englewood. We will try you back in a couple of minutes.*

*Voicemail: Good afternoon Mr. Hurst my name is Marcia Moermond here at the City Council, calling about your property. What we are going to need to do is move on to our next set of cases. I will continue your case for next Tuesday and come to some conclusion on your case. If you have any questions, please contact our staff.*

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 10/10/2023**

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

**Vacant Building Registrations****20**     [RLH VBR 23-56](#)     Appeal of Stephanie Powers to a Vacant Building Registration Requirement at 914 COOK AVENUE EAST.

**Sponsors:**     Yang

*Waive VB fee for 120 days (to December 11, 2023).*

*Stephanie Powers, owner, appeared via phone*

*Moermond: Good afternoon, Stephanie Powers this is Marcia Moermond at Saint Paul City Council. I am calling you about your appeal at 914 Cook. I have on the line two other folks: Matt Dornfeld, supervisor in the vacant building at the city's Department of Safety and Inspections. We also have Mitch Imbertson, who is a supervisor and Fire Inspections over at the department. What my job is going to be today is to hear your appeal about this vacant building registration at 914 Cook. I need to develop a recommendation for the Council on that. I'm giving them a recommendation, if you're OK with what that is, they're going to go with that without discussion. But if for any reason, you're not okay with what I'm recommending you can definitely come attend in person by phone and asked the council for a different outcome. They could look at the matter differently than what I do. What I like to do in these circumstances is to start with a staff report and have staff describe the conditions and what's going on and then talk to you about why you are appealing and what you're looking for today. I'll turn it over to the staff team and have them lay the groundwork about what's going on at the City and then talk with you about what you're looking for.*

*Dornfeld: 914 Cook Avenue was made a vacant building back in August 11, 2020. Moving forward, skipping those next 3 years it appears most recently as of September 18th, Building Inspector Nathan documented that a new code compliance inspection is needed. All current permits are to be canceled and there appears to be zoning issues with this property being utilize as a future duplex. Also, inspector Robert Humphrey noted that he did speak to the property owner in reference to these issues. He made note that she is aware of the next steps and plans to continue to convert into a duplex. I am assuming that we are here today to discuss that the vacant building fee that is coming to.*

*Moermond: Mr. Imbertson, you have anything to add.*

*Imbertson: The only thing I have to add is that the property is not currently registered for their certificate of occupancy program. Our involvement was just to the fire that happened at the property after getting the code compliance inspection completed. If they intend for the property to be a rental or an owner occupied, they can apply for a certificate of occupancy, concurred with the code compliance approval.*

*Moermond: We have a few moving parts here Ms. Powers and the main one for us today has to do with the vacant building fee. Can you tell me a little bit about what's going on and what you're looking for today?*

*Powers: I've been paying the fee every year since in 2020 and that's \$7,500, so far. My contractor has been working steadily to get the house in habitable state and has many delays have happen due to COVID-19 and related problems in the supply chain and worker shortage. He says he estimates the house will be completed well, he missed*

that date, but sometime this year. He said September 30th but he missed that. I have taken out a mortgage of \$234,000 and have been making payments every month in property I cannot live in, so I'm paying 2 mortgages. I had no knowledge of the first being rolled into my property taxes causing my mortgage to go from \$1,350 a month to \$2,050 a month with no warning. There are also all kinds of fees add it to my property taxes at the same time that were probably related to the condemnation of the house. I was never able to find out the sources of the charges and there was no way to appeal them. I paid the 2021 and the 2022 fees in a timely manner. I was prepared to take \$2,500 again this August that the fee double with no explanation and being charged for water and sewer when the water has been turned off since August 2020 and then being charged for garbage collecting and recycling and the cans that have been rolled up behind the garage that have not been use since August of 2020. The appeal is very late because I was evicted from my Arlington residence in March 2023 and only just received a notice from the owner of the house which was in August. I don't know what to say please help.

Moermond: Your contractor is saying that this will be done this year. Is that what you're hearing?

Powers: Yes.

Moermond: Checking the computer for a couple of things here.

Powers: Yes, I did ask to have that made it into a duplex but I was told no. I didn't realize that was still an option going forward and someone did call me from the City and I sent in which was like \$600. I send in the fee for all the code compliance inspection, and that was maybe 2 weeks ago. I am having all of those redone.

Moermond: Have you talked to somebody about the zoning application that needs to be made? I see that you did make one in the past but that was denied. It looks like they were looking for more materials or something. Have you tackled that part of it?

Powers: No, I just assume that was a no and I wasn't going forward with it .

Moermond: Okay. I would say that don't make that assumption.

Powers: Ideally, I would love to live on the second floor and rent out the first floor.

Moermond: Okay. I think that maybe it just wasn't filled out in a way that it made sense to the reviewer. What I'm looking at is something that says zoning variance application case was received citing chapter33 to have 2 electrical meters, which is not in the zoning code, rejected application and sent it back along with the check and the letter. Were you applying for an electrical permit that would have 2 meters? Is that what kind of triggered this thing?

Powers: I don't I don't know. My contractor said it would be cheaper if he could put the 2 meters in when he was doing all the electrical.

Moermond: I'm going to say as it looks to me like your issue is going to be that you don't have a lot that is big enough square footage wise under that code to have a duplex. You would apply for a variance to that code that would allow you to have a duplex. You can't right now but you could ask for a variance and that would be the nature of your application. If you get the variance, then you can go ahead and make the building changes like having 2 meters. I'm going to ask, Mr. Dornfeld and Mr.

*Imbertson: I can see that David Eide is the one who reviewed this before. Is he a person who would be a resource about filling out a form? Is there a different person now at DSI? What can you tell us?*

*Dornfeld: I'll let Mitch take that one. I don't know.*

*Imbertson: I believe he should still be a good contact to start with. If he's not able to help, he should be able to direct the call to someone that would be a working with that currently, but he's a good contact to start with.*

*Moermond: We will send you a follow-up letter to this hearing and we will include this information in there but I would say reach out to him and find out about filling out a form and about, I think it's the square footage at the end of the day that is going to be the issue. I found that your lot size is 40 wide and 125 deep. Does that sound right? Power: That sounds right.*

*Moermond: That's 5,000 square feet. I say call him and find out I'm just not 100% sure, and find out what he's looking for, and what he would need to allow for construction of a duplex. If there's a zoning change necessary, or you need a new inspection report. I'm not 100% clear now that I'm looking at it, if it's the zoning or the fact that your inspection report is kind of not in sync with what you want to use it for. Let me re-say that you've got building code things and you've got zoning things. You may need to deal with a zoning variance, and David Eide can help you with that. You may already be able to have a legal duplex and the building code list of items that you have, that code compliance report, that would have been developed with a single-family home in mind. It may be that Nathan Bruhn, who is the assistant building official, he might have looked at that and said your inspection report isn't in alignment with the kind of permit that you're applying for, so you need a new inspection report that is specifically for duplex. I think you're going to be trying to diagnose that with those 2 guys and we'll get their information.*

*Powers: I've got Nathan Bruhn's information.*

*Moermond: Hopefully that at least helps a little bit. What I can tell you about the vacant building fee. It looks like we see here August 11th of 2020 as when a file got opened, and what that means is that this vacant building fee covers the time period of August 20th of 2023 through August 19th of 2024. I can definitely recommend that the Council give you a limited term waiver of that fee so that if you get the work done in that time period you wouldn't have a vacant building fee. I'm willing to go with what would amount to a long waiver for me, and that's 120 days since your fee was due on August 11th, so 120 day waiver takes you to December 11th, so if you get your certificate of occupancy by that day, you've got no fee. If you miss that deadline and you go longer than that, the City will come forward as an assessment. I'd like you to appeal that assessment if you end up with it, and in that process if you've already got your code compliance, I can help to get that prorated. It can move downward like if you are in the vacant building fee for 5 months, we could go with 5/12 of the year, if that makes center. I'm sympathetic to that, I have to say that we hear a lot about contractors and COVID, but that situation has largely resolved itself. I hope that your contractors are able to move forward more quickly than not because this is adding up for you.*

*Powers: It has been a lot faster lately.*

*Moermond: We'll go ahead with that. Those are to contact people one on the building*

side, and one of the zoning sides and hopefully they can help you map a course forward, that makes sense for your situation. I'm going to say one more thing, I would ask if you need to get a new inspection report, which I suspect that Nathan Bruhn is going to want you to do that, ask him if that's okay. If you get a building only or if you need a full code compliance, you already signed 2 weeks ago, never mind. We'll send you a letter confirming all this that will come out late in the week by email and hopefully things move a little bit more smoothly for you moving forward.

**Referred to the City Council due back on 10/18/2023**

**21**      [RLH VBR 23-60](#)      Appeal of Kent W. Jefferson to a Vacant Building Registration Fee Warning Letter at 2081 LONDIN LANE.

**Sponsors:**      Prince

*Deny the appeal to be released from the VB program but make property a Cat 1 VB.*

*Matt Dornfeld and Mitch Imbertson, Staff DSI  
Kent Jerson- Appellant*

*Moermond: Good Afternoon Kent Jefferson, this is Marcia Moermond from Saint Paul City Council calling you about your appeal for your property at 2081 Londin Ln. Also, on the phone line with us, we have two folks. Mr. Matt Dornfeld, from the vacant building program he's a supervisor, and also Mr. Mitch Imbertson, supervisor from the Fire Inspection program, they will be helping us out today. I'm looking at a vacant building registration appeal, and I'm going to I think start with a report from Mr. Imbertson. Let's hear from those inspectors and then we'll talk with you about why you're appealing and what you're looking for. I'm going to need to make a recommendation to the Council on your appeal. It's just that, a recommendation, if you're OK with what it is, they're going to go with that. If for any reason you're not okay with what I'm recommending, you can definitely submit additional information or testify and they could look at it differently than I do. We will follow up with you at the end of the week with a letter confirming the details of the hearing so that you have that, as well. I think I will just turn it over to Mr. Imbertson and Mr. Dornfeld, and then we will come back with you. Mr. Imbertson, we talked about this back in 2020 and revisited lately? Can you give a little background on your process over at fire inspections before we turn it over to Mr. Dornfeld.*

*Imbertson: This property is a one-unit residential building that was in our Fire Certificate of Occupancy program. It was up for a renewal inspection in 2020 and at that time it ended up getting referred to the vacant building program as a category one vacant building and had the certificate of occupancy revoke, and it has not since then been reapproved. It has had a revoke fire certificate of occupancy since that happened in June of 2020. It looks like in 2023 starting in March, there was the process to try to get access to the property to start a new renewal inspection and get the property recertified to what the inspector never got in to the property and that ended up getting referred back to the vacant building program, as a category 2. A property that would now need a code compliance inspection to be set up, and recertified up to the code compliance process before it could be it reoccupied. The fire certificate of occupancy would be granted upon completing the code compliance approval. The intention is to have as a rental property again.*

*Moermond: When that referral came to you Mr. Dornfeld in the vacant building program, what did you all do?*

*Dornfeld: August 22, 2023 I made this property a category 2 vacant building per the certificate of occupancy revocation. At the time of inspection, I noted that the property was vacant and secure other than the garage surface door, which I was able to close at time of inspection. I did photograph some severe damage on the northern side of the property. That is the reason why for the declaration of the category 2 status as a they there's extensive water damage and possible critter living in that whole.*

*Moermond: Mr. Jefferson, can you tell me a little bit about your appeal and what you're looking for today?*

*Jefferson: I don't think the house is in that bad of shape. I did have some trouble this summer where I hire 2 different contractors to mow the grass every few weeks, they kind of crept out of me. But I was down there this weekend, and it is not in bad shape, I actually clean it up. There is some storm damage on the north side to reconstruct, there's no water damage, no damage inside. I did set up for the contractor to take care of that in the summer, so I probably made the mistake of telling him to get it when you get the chance and that they've been really busy this summer. Like you said, the house is secure, there's no broken windows out there, other than the one cracked window in the basement. I took that out to get repaired. There are some tree branches in the pile in the drive away from the storms again. I am trying to get somebody out there to get it cleaned out. No problems or questions with the neighbors. I know both of them that both have my phone number and name. I gave it to them if there's any questions or problems. The interior of the house has been painted, there really isn't much left to do in there. Probably not even a permit required except that it needs a new electric service, otherwise wise, the interior is in good shape it has been painted. The floor sounders tested some spots in the floor to see if they could sand out the high wood. I know that time flies probably acquire that house 14 years ago, and at that time it was completely redone sighting, roof, windows, interior, kitchen. I rented it for a number of years. The last renter I had was a little difficult getting help but she was a woman with children. There is storm damage on the north side, which that's really the only thing that you can physically see that needs repair. Gas and electric are on so I have to get that shot off before winter. I have never received a call or complaint from the neighbors. My neighbor called me this summer and was having a birthday party or something and ask if they could park some cars there. He actually got crap all over his yard, including upholstered chairs on the curb that have been there all summer. Yes, I did contest that it's not that bad. Is it foolish and frustrating that we have not have this completed yet, yes. But it really looks fine here. I had one-time last winter that got in there, didn't do any damage they just hung out there. I think that was the former tenant because there was no damage, they must have had a key. That's really where it is. I mean, the garage has gotten stuff in it from the tenants that moved out that was supposed to come back and get it. I have to get it cleanup to get that out but again, it's all inside there's nothing outside.*

*Moermond: What are you looking for today, Mr. Jefferson?*

*Jefferson: Well, I don't really want to go into the vacant program and pay the \$2,800. I'd like to avoid the cost and time. As far as permits required the only one probably has to do with the electric service, which gets its own screw and fuses, you can't really do much with that. There's really no carpentry work to be done next everything inside the house is good except for sanding the floors. It is painted cleaned up and ready to go.*

*Moermond: What are you going to do with the year?*

*Jefferson: Well, I had somebody who wanted to rent it, but rental has become a bit of a problem with folks, so I'm probably just going to sell it.*

*Moermond: I tell you what I'm looking at here. I'm looking at the situation back in 2020 where your renter left, and you didn't want to renew your Fire C of O. You were not going to have this be a rental property. I said, OK, you're revoked you can't rent it, but you don't have to be in the vacant building program based on that alone. You didn't meet other aspects of the definition for registered vacant building. But you do now, and there's two items that I think are important here. I look at the soffits and eaves and I think that is a code violation, therefore, most definitely will need a permit to have that corrected. It is in excess of a \$500 repair for sure. I'm looking at a yard and now yard and I'll tell you what the photos taken on August 22nd, sir, it is terribly overgrown. I'm looking at trees that are growing in between that storage garage building and house maybe into the foundation. The fence is certainly completely obstructed, and the lawn hasn't been mowed. We've got a gravel driveway that is more lawn than driveway. It's not looking like anybody cares about it. The taxes are being paid and is scheduled for forfeiture in 2025, unless the taxes get caught up again. All of these things tell me that you're well on your way to abandoning the property, rather than taking control of it. You started to interact with it again based on the fact that there's this referral to the vacant building program. This is not great. Even if we were to say it doesn't have multiple code violations, it has certainly a vacant house for more than 365 days, it's been more than 3 years at this point. You're in White Bear Lake, according to be the Ramsey County record. I'm not sure why it is in such a bad shape. You're so near to be able to manage it better.*

*Jefferson: That is close to my controller's office, but I live in Osceola, its only an hour away. I did contract with a couple different landscape companies to keep the grass mowed and everything. This summer was very hard getting people to do things. It's mowed up and cleaned up, I should have taken some pictures. Some of the shrubs and stuff are overgrown. It's kind of a weird house because there's overgrown shrubs in the sides of the house but it also gives a privacy. Some people like I said aside from what you see in those topics that is the only thing that would be considered damage on the house, which it can be fix in a couple days. It's probably a 20,250-\$40,000 house, who knows. There have been things going on with health and family, which I just haven't been able to pay attention to some of this staffing. It's been hard to get people to do things.*

*Moermond: You yourself, have not gone by there to take care of things to make sure your contractors were doing what you hired them to do.*

*Jefferson: I end up going down there to do the grass and stuff because like I said they just kind of crept out on me. I was down there this weekend to cut all the gras and trees that have fallen down because of the storm. It is all tidy up, I also trim down some shrubs. I never received complaints from neighbors. I go to my neighbor to the east, and he has crap all over his place. I think he rents the duplex and has vacant cars. But yes, I have not been able to get down as much as I should, yes and it doesn't take much to get it put back together and ready to sell. It is secure. The only incident that I assume it had to be renters as they had a key, and they didn't do any damage.*

*Moermond: I'm shocked that you didn't rekey the place over the course of all these years. I'm looking at a singular item if I were to count soffits and eaves together as one, I'm willing to recommend that the Council make this a Category 1 registered vacant building, but I'm also going to say that I do think that this should be in the registered*

*vacant building program, so far it has benefited from the City's attention to it and that you have been inspired to go take care of business there, where that wasn't happening before. Perhaps now would be a good time to motivate to get the inspection reports you need to sell it and move on and this place can be occupied by somebody and become useful again.*

*Jefferson: What is the difference between Category 1 and Category 2?*

*Moermond: You wouldn't need to have a code compliance inspection report if you're a Category 1, you would if you're a category 2. It's a matter of the repairs required before reoccupied. I am saying re-occupancy will get you out of the vacant building program. But you are in the vacant building program as a Category 1, so until somebody is living in there, that's the situation. That actually wouldn't be you because a construction company owns it not a human being, so it would have to be a person to owner occupy it.*

*Jefferson: I am one in the same.*

*Moermond: But you're not it's a business and not a person. We need an actual person owning and occupying the structure. That will be the ticket out of the vacant building program.*

*Jefferson: Does Category 1 still require the \$2500.*

*Moermond: Yes, it does.*

*Jefferson: Can you get me out of that? Or a time frame?*

*Moermond: No. If the fee goes unpaid it will roll onto the property taxes, and that would be on to probably coming forward actually as an assessment. I don't know a month or 2 and then it wouldn't be scheduled for hearing until 2024. It would be discussed in 2024 as an assessment. If that went un pay, that would show up on 2025 taxes.*

*Jefferson: Yeah, I'd like to avoid that. I don't want more problems. Someone called me and so I signed in for an inspection on this house and they sent out 4 letters and they all come back. What's going am I sending it to an old address? As soon as they got a hold of county record they found me and they called me. I talked to them on the phone, and I told them I can meet them out there whenever. He was kind of upset and I don't blame them but have been there 4 times and nobody responded to the letters, and they all came back to his office.*

*Moermond: This is my recommendation that the Council, and you can definitely look for a different outcome from the City Council. It is a public hearing, and we will follow up with a letter with my recommendation to them. That's what I will recommend, and you can contest it if you want.*

*Jefferson: Is it considered a Category 1 right now?*

*Moermond: Not until the Council votes on it, I would think. But let me ask Mr. Dornfeld on how his department would handle that.*

*Dornfeld: What that means from a Category 2 to a Category 1 on your recommendation to mean the appellant was okay with that because most people would be okay with that. That's an upgrade.*



*Moermond: There you go. He is willing to change his records at this time.*

*Jefferson: So that's the best you will be able to do for me?*

*Moermond: That's the best I'm going to recommend for you.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 10/18/2023**