

## Mai Vang

---

**From:** Mai Vang  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 21, 2025 8:15 AM  
**To:** Matt Dornfeld  
**Cc:** Alex Dravis  
**Subject:** RE: 677 California Ave E

Ok, thank you. That's enough information to say that permits are not finalized, if any. With the data recovery, hopefully, he can get going on it\ otherwise, he needs to disclose to the buyer.

Probably will need a sale review too.

## Mai Vang

(She, her)

*Legislative Hearing Coordinator* | St Paul City Council

M: (651) 266-8585 ; D: (651) 266-8563

310 City Hall, 15 W. Kellogg Blvd, St Paul, MN 55102



---

**From:** Matt Dornfeld <matt.dornfeld@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 21, 2025 7:28 AM  
**To:** Mai Vang <mai.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Subject:** RE: 677 California Ave E

Still a VB2 as far as I know. Looks like Insp Dravis wanted it changed back to a VB2 back in May for failure to comply. I don't have any info other than that. Sorry.

---

**From:** Mai Vang <[mai.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:mai.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 20, 2025 11:41 AM  
**To:** Alex Dravis <[Alex.Dravis@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Alex.Dravis@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>; Keith Demarest <[Keith.Demarest@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Keith.Demarest@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>; Matt Dornfeld <[matt.dornfeld@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:matt.dornfeld@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** RE: 677 California Ave E

Alex, That is prob why VB sent to assessment. But we have no way of getting those information.

Matt, is the building still a VB?

Mai

---

**From:** Alex Dravis <[Alex.Dravis@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Alex.Dravis@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 20, 2025 10:11 AM  
**To:** Keith Demarest <[Keith.Demarest@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Keith.Demarest@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>  
**Cc:** Mai Vang <[mai.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:mai.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** RE: 677 California Ave E

Good morning, Mai,

As far as I am aware, he never submitted a CO for this property. The inspection was completed on April 30, and it was found through inspection, and his admission that the gypsum board, plumbing repairs and possibly electrical, I do not recall if there was required electrical repairs, were not completed under approved permits, and the work was not completed by a licensed contractor. He was advised at the inspection that any further enforcement action will be at the recommendation of the LHO. He was instructed to notify me when the permits are closed and finalized, per the LHO recommendation, which never occurred.



**Alex Dravis**  
**Fire Safety Inspector II**  
Pronouns: He/Him  
Department of Safety & Inspections  
375 Jackson St Suite 220  
Saint Paul, MN 55101  
P: 651-266-9149|F:651-266-8951  
[Alex.Dravis@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Alex.Dravis@ci.stpaul.mn.us)  
[www.StPaul.gov](http://www.StPaul.gov)



---

**From:** Keith Demarest <[Keith.Demarest@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Keith.Demarest@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 20, 2025 9:07 AM  
**To:** Alex Dravis <[Alex.Dravis@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Alex.Dravis@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>  
**Cc:** Mai Vang <[mai.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:mai.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** RE: 677 California Ave E

Hi Alex,

Are you able to reply to Mai on this one?

Mai is wondering when Roger got the Fire C of O reinstated. Would you happen to know?

---

**From:** Mai Vang <[mai.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:mai.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 20, 2025 8:26 AM  
**To:** Keith Demarest <[Keith.Demarest@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Keith.Demarest@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>  
**Cc:** Alex Dravis <[Alex.Dravis@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Alex.Dravis@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** RE: 677 California Ave E

Hi Keith and Alex,

Roger Barcus appealed before Marcia on February 18 and she waived the vacant building fee for 90 days to May 1, 2025 and allow permits. If he can get his Fire C of O reinstated prior to the May 1<sup>st</sup> deadline, Marcia would grant his appeal and release from the VB program. Unfortunately, this didn't happen and it got processed as an assessment. His original hearing was August 12 but due to the cyber-attack

we kept having to reschedule his hearing dates. I have now rescheduled him to January 26, 2026 Legislative Hearing. He claimed the building is no longer a vb and that we should delete his fee because he is selling his house. I advised him to have the VB fee put into an escrow at closing until the outcome of the hearing, but we will not waive the entire fee at this time. So I am guessing he is trying to find out when if and when his permit(s) are finalized and no longer in VB.

I have no access to information, as you both. He was getting frustrated with us having to reschedule his hearings, even though I have told him that he will not be invoiced yet, will not be on the taxes and will not accrued interest due to the ongoing data recovery by DSI; but he won't have any of this and wants to settle this asap. **So, I guess the question is when did he get his Fire C of O reinstated?**

Below is minutes of the 2/18/25:

*Waive VB fee for 90 days (to May 1, 2025) and allow permits to be pulled. If Fire C of O is reinstated prior to May 1, grant appeal and release from VB program.*

*Roger Barcus, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Der Vue: single-family home. On January 23, 2025 a complaint was received that included a possibly non-owner-occupied property with no Fire Certificate of Occupancy. A Pipe burst resulting in flooding. An inspection was done January 24 and the property was condemned due to the burst pipe which led to a water shut off and extensive water damage. Lack of smoke and carbons. Unsanitary conditions throughout including visible mold in basement. Did confirm it was non-owner occupied. It was condemned for immediate vacate and sent to Vacant Building January 24, 2025.*

*Moermond: in the orders there are several things that refer to the water damage and would any arise to a structural concern? Looks like a lot of ceiling damage from the photos.*

*Vue: water is a building's worst enemy and based on the photos we are noting damage through the windows, ceilings, and I can't imagine this was just from this one pipe bursting. It may have been there prior to the inspection by our office.*

*Staff report by Supervisor Matt Dornfeld: we opened a Category 2 Vacant Building January 24, 2025 per that referral from Fire Inspections. We documented the house appeared to be vacant and secure at the time of the inspection.*

*Barcus: the supposed pipe burst we found out was not that at all but a slow leak in the dishwasher. That's the only problem in the house. Obviously those living there didn't bother shutting it off or noticing it for a long time. We all know the dishwasher doesn't stay on that long and the valves inside don't let water continue to run unless it's on. The people living there let this happen over a long period without telling us. I agree that because of water there is damage in the house. The dishwasher has been removed and will be replaced with a new one. We have to replace all the carpeting. Water is on in the house because there's no longer a leak. The mold can be cleaned.*

*We bought the house 16 years ago for our daughter. She lived there for years. Then she moved to Korea during which time we rented the house out. You are absolutely right we didn't have it inspected nor approved for rental. I admit that. Our plan now is to replace the carpet and fix the walls and ceiling and sell the house. It won't be rented again. My daughter won't be moving in there again unless its required.*

*Moermond: we have bad interior conditions, water damage because of a dishwasher you say?*

*Vue: based on the photos and conversation with inspector who did the inspection the damage to the flooring and walls and windows isn't just in the kitchen where the dishwasher was*

*Barcus: it ruined the carpet and the two bedrooms in the basement. All of that area was damaged. It went for a long time without saying anything.*

*Vue: I see a window frame and sash that have a lot of water. Is this window near the kitchen, or below it?*

*Barcus: let me look at the photos. If a window needs to be replaced, we will do that. That is a 10-foot board on top of the foundation. It goes all the way around the perimeter of the lower level. Yes, it was wet. But it is dry now. It wasn't rotten, it was just wet. I do see several places of damage in the ceiling. I see one spot in a bedroom that does have some dark color to it, appears to be mold.*

*Moermond: I see a lot of mold all around. I see a fair bit between ceiling and walls. All makes me concerns the mold issues exist between the walls and on the framing.*

*Barcus: we're certainly willing to do that. Replace drywall and treat boards as needed. They were in there 15 months.*

*Vue: since we see visible mold, we'd be concerned about what is inside the walls with any sort of water damage or flooding. Typically, a building permit will be required. We don't know what was affected with insulation.*

*Barcus: the house looks different now it is dried out. Some drywall needs to be replaced and the framing addressed. Insulation as well if needed.*

*Moermond: sounds like you want to get the repairs done. I'm assuming you'd prefer not to be in the Vacant Building program?*

*Barcus: yes.*

*Moermond: I think we all want to see the house cleaned up. I'm ok with waiving the fee for a limited period. **If you can get your signoffs from Fire inspections before that time elapses**, there would be no Vacant Building fee. 90 days, if your Certificate of Occupancy is reinstated by May 1, then you're out of the Vacant Building program.*

Mai

---

**From:** Keith Demarest <[Keith.Demarest@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Keith.Demarest@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>

**Sent:** Friday, October 17, 2025 8:25 AM

**To:** Mai Vang <[mai.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:mai.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>

**Cc:** Alex Dravis <[Alex.Dravis@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Alex.Dravis@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>; Keith Demarest <[Keith.Demarest@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Keith.Demarest@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>

**Subject:** 677 California Ave E

Hello and good morning, Mai,

This is Keith over at Fire Safety. Happy Friday.

I just received a phone call from property owner Roger Barcus. Roger explained that his property at 677 California Ave E. is a registered vacant building.

Alex Dravis, one of our district inspectors, apparently inspected this property back in April 2025.

Roger asked me if I could retrieve and forward Alex' inspection report from April to him so he can get it over to you.

Alex is due back in the office next week. It is very likely that due to the cyber attack that we still do not have access to our old reports.

I told Roger that I would loop you in on what he was requesting.

Roger's contact information is:

[rogerbarcus@gmail.com](mailto:rogerbarcus@gmail.com)

651-246-8028

Thank you, Mai. Have a good weekend.