



City of Saint Paul

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Minutes - Final

Legislative Hearings

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Tuesday, December 2, 2025

9:00 AM

Room 330 City Hall & Court House/Remote

9:00 a.m. Hearings (none)

10:00 a.m. Hearings

Special Tax Assessments

1 **RLH TA 25-411** Ratifying theAppealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 680 MACALESTER STREET. (File No. CRT2601, Assessment No. 268200)

Sponsors: Jost

Approve the assessment.

Cameron & Michelle Severson, owners, appeared via phone

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor Mitch Imbertson: this is a single-family residential house in our Certificate of Occupancy program. It was charged a base fee of \$239 based on the building size, which covers the initial inspection and one reinspection. Initially a no-entry penalty fee was charged for April 2, 2025 of \$89 and a reinspection fee of \$119 from April 24. At the time the fees went to assessment, the no-entry fee was removed and the remaining charges are the initial inspection fee, the extra reinspection fee, for a total of 3 billable visits to the property. Initial inspection and 2 reinspections.

Cameron Severson: you are saying we are being billed for reinspection, but the April 2 fee was removed?

Moermond: yes. The one was a no-show which means no one was there when the inspector came, they can bill that but when we conservatively read state law we shouldn't assess for that, so they are removed from the assessment.

Imbertson: that was in addition to the other reinspection fee and was removed; this is for 3 inspection fees. The April 28 bill included a base fee, no entry fee, and one reinspection. Four visits to the property where the inspector couldn't get in on one visit.

Cameron Severson: this bill is dated May 2 to June 5, 2025 5/2/25 to 6/5/25 but their lease was up April 30th. We didn't know if this was being billed for some future period. This \$517 that we owe are for things that happened before this May 2 date?

Moermond: yes, February 25 and April 24 dates.

Cameron Severson: I don't know if this is the place to air grievances. We purchased in April 2024 and rented it out for a year and the tenant outright gamed the system from day 1 and we couldn't enforce the lease terms because of the local laws. Between the rent they didn't pay and the fees for removing their property and putting in temporary storage and then disposing of it per the laws, it put us in the hole for \$19,000. We've incurred a considerable amount of hardship here. We filed to go to conciliation court and haven't received a date yet. It is likely we won't ever recover this money, it has been a significant financial hardship on us, and this will add to that. I don't know if there's any recourse for people who have been victimized by local laws.

Michelle Severson: we had renters for a year, they signed an agreement with a property management company we were working with and from the beginning the renters--the property management company had to take them to court 4 times over the year because they weren't paying the rent. It involves all this time waiting. They showed up to court with thousands of dollars, they basically never paid rent until we went to court.

Cameron Severson: we were incurring legal fees each time.

Michelle Severson: the tenants were verbally abusive to the property management company so there had to be a lawyer involved every time there was communication. We ended up about \$20,000 in debt including the eviction. They didn't leave at the end of April and finally got a date to evict them by the sheriff. Then we had to pay to remove and store their items,

Cameron Severson: they had previous evictions on their record that we couldn't consider.

Michelle Severson: I found other situations where they went to small claims court.

Moermond: it sounds like you had a rough time. Is this your first rental property?

Michelle Severson: yes.

Moermond: are you still in Denver?

Michelle Severson: we live in this house now.

Moermond: that's great. The eviction laws are all state laws, not local code. We don't have any control at the City level over eviction court and how that works. The best advice I can give is the Attorney General's website, but it isn't something I can do anything about. I just can look at whether this was a legitimate City expense incurred related to this property. I have to say yes. The problem with the lease is it is a contract between private parties. That's the court system who handles contract disputes. It appears we were notifying RP Management, was that your property manager?

Seversons: Yes.

Moermond: they got 2 bills from the City that went unpaid, that's how we ended up here. Any information on that?

Michelle Severson: I'm surprised actually because any time there was a bill due that

wasn't the tenant's responsibility they were pretty good about reaching out, but I don't recall the reaching out to us.

Moermond: there was a bill April 28 that went to them in Shoreview. A second one would have gone out 30 days later. We can email those to you. I'm kind of stuck with was this incurred. We can't subsidize private contractual disputes and losses related to that. That is no comfort whatsoever I know, having gone through what you did. I'm stuck with this. The no-entry fee was removed, but a service charge is added. It is a difference of \$70. I'd think that would be something that company owes you, in my opinion.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/14/2026

11:00 a.m. Hearings

Making Finding on Nuisance Abatements

2 [RLH SAO 25-70](#) Making finding on the appealed nuisance abatement ordered for 855 THIRD STREET EAST in Council File RLH VO 25-23.

Sponsors: Johnson

The nuisance is partially abated.

Paris Getty, owner, appeared via phone

Moermond: we're calling about the cleanup in your yard.

Getty: it was done last night because of all the snow.

Staff update by Supervisor Lisa Martin: the inspector went yesterday afternoon and it was not done. If they're saying it was done last night we'll have to send someone back over to take a look.

Getty: that's fair.

Moermond: we'll have an inspector go by and hopefully be able to tell the Council it is done. We'll let you know if the inspector finds anything you should be aware of.

Getty: it was delayed because of the snow. I think everything is out of the top deck and the yard. It has been difficult due to problems with my leg.

Referred to the City Council due back on 12/10/2025

Correction Orders

3 [RLH CO 25-15](#) Appeal of Lita Fierro to a Revised Correction Order and Summary Abatement Order at 927 DESOTO STREET.

Sponsors: Kim

Layover to LH December 9 at 11 am for further discussion. PO to submit work plan/schedule for completing items on correction order.

Lita Fierro, owner, appeared via phone

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: October 13, 2025 a revised correction order was issued with quite a few items, 17 items, originated from a complaint issued by Fire inspections July 10, 2024. Our orders listed a compliance date of November 17th at 10 am. Photos are in the file.

Moermond: were these orders simply transferred from Fire to this? Or was there also an inspection?

Martin: Inspector Williams went to the property. We also have a report of too many animals, but that's an animal control issue.

Fierro: I don't know what is going on. They came in the house and looked at everything, and the second time with a different guy who deals with homeowners and gets information from Sarah Bono and puts down the same thing as her and corrected it, now we're going through the same thing again. I don't understand why he put all the same things on there.

Moermond: the appeal said you need more than 3 months. So you want to know why the orders look like this, need time, any other questions?

Fierro: we have to get the siding, windows, driveway, all this stuff done and we only get 3 weeks, 2 months, anyone living in a house can't do that in 2 or 3 months. I'm not complaining, but it is hard on us because my sister and her fiancé work and busting their butts to get a job and now my brother died because he had to work in the yard and had a problem with his heart and died August 21. I'm mad, I'm angry, he should have never been out there doing stuff, and we lost him because of that. [Fierro cries]

Moermond: this was your house?

Fierro: yes, he was trying to get things fixed so we didn't get into trouble. It was hot that day and he was sweating and we told him not to go out and he did it anyway because you guys were giving us all these notices and telling us we had to be done within 2 weeks and he ended up dying of a heart attack in his sleep. It hurts.

Moermond: of course it does. Do you want some time to compose yourself?

Fierro: I'm just getting tired of all of this stuff. I have problems, my sugar is acting up, and all this stuff to deal with and you put a toll on us and we're trying our damnedest to get everything done and you guys are killing us. I'm not trying to be a b-i-t-c-h about it but it hurts.

Moermond: we've been talking about the problems at your house for more than a year.

Fierro: we tell you every time we don't have the money and are trying and you guys just keep on, keep on.

Moermond: with all due respect you've been getting extensions upon extensions, we worked with your attorney, waited for you to talk to the tribe about assistance, given you every ask you had. We had come to an agreement on this a year ago. I want to say this isn't that we walked in and said you have a couple months, you have had 14+

months to work on it. What I'd like to see at this point, and I know we've talked about this before, a work plan to show how you will approach these items. Say, the dryer venting, find out how much it will cost, when you'll have the money for it, that type of thing. If you come back with a plan, not everything all at once, how you want to approach it that would be helpful for everyone to have it broken down into manageable pieces. I think its fairest to give you a chance to put something together. Have you looked for other funding?

Fierro: there isn't anything. Before they said we have to have the house in our name, then we do and now no one will help me. I called everyone in that book you gave me. I have everything written down.

Moermond: are you comfortable sitting down with your daughter and listing specifics?

Fierro: I can't tell you when. Everything costs money.

Martin: there was also a Summary Abatement Order issued November 19th to clean up the items in the yard.

Moermond: so I am thinking that is different garbage.

*Fierro: there should be nothing out there. I'll have to look at the videos to see who is coming back there. We cleaned out that yard. It is clean. Someone is dumping sh*t back there.*

Moermond: the photos were taken last Tuesday and I see at least 5 garbage bags, and then a tote. The thing it is there, and I know you have mobility issues, do you have someone to help?

Fierro: no. My brother-in-law did that and he died. My sister and brother-in-law are never here because they have jobs and never are around.

Martin: do they live there?

*Fierro: well yeah, I can't live here by myself with all the sh*t you guys put on me.*

Martin: how many animals live there?

Fierro: my 3 cats and a dog.

Moermond: I'd like your commitment to get those garbage bags gone by the end of the week. I think that shouldn't be a problem no matter how much someone works. I'd like you to put together a plan, we'll confirm with inspector Williams if anything can or should be removed. We'll talk to you again next Tuesday at 11.

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 12/9/2025

2:00 p.m. Hearings

Fire Certificates of Occupancy

| | | |
|----------|----------------|--|
| 4 | RLH FCO | Appeal of Jaswant A. Teekasingh to a Fire Inspection Report at 159 |
| | 25-74 | PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE WEST. |

Sponsors: Bowie

Grant extension to comply with fire orders to February 2, 2026. Issue Certificate of Occupancy with condition of meeting repair deadline.

Jaswant Teekasingh, owner, appeared

Moermond: we have a fire Certificate of Occupancy appeal as well as you wanting to discuss the Vacant Building fee. I think we have all the information we need on this. [Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor Mitch Imbertson: the Certificate of Occupancy actions had an inspection made of the property as follow up to the previous appeal. Deadlines were not met which meant revocation of the Certificate of Occupancy and required a full inspection to reauthorize occupancy of the building. This was also confirmed by Robert Humphrey who coordinates the Vacant Building portion, agreed due to the Code Compliance inspection requirement being waived. This was for a auto body license application, which also requires a full inspection. Brian Schmidt and I inspected, the orders were done related to the office and all permits closed. Two new issues noted on the walk through, an exit sign was on a door that wasn't a public access exit and also a self-closing door in the mixing room. We did notice the storage of flammable liquids has been greatly reduced from previous levels, as a result we wrote the order as an option to either replace the door to the room or provide information you didn't require that high-hazard flammable liquid room anymore. If you aren't maintaining the mixing room then the expectation is that the storage of flammable liquids in the entire building does not go past the general requirements. We discussed the alternate means of compliance with Mr. Teekasingh via email.

Moermond: the vacant building file was closed about a month ago. So this inspection doesn't have to do with the Vacant Building registration it is simply part of regular business.

Imbertson: Regardless of the Vacant Building status the Certificate of Occupancy had been revoked and requires a full inspection prior to reinstating that certificate.

Moermond: in this case getting out of the Vacant Building program was closing permits?

Imbertson: that appears to be the case.

Moermond: so we have two issues, self-closing doors and the exit sign.

Teekasingh: if I removed the self-closing door I wanted to know the implications as a body shop, I didn't get a response. I also asked about the door slab.

Imbertson: if you replace with a fire rated door it is a whole assembly and would have to be replaced. The frame existing itself now looks to be in good shape.

Teekasingh: I looked into that this week, and it appears I just need a new physical slab with new hinges. That's what I wanted clarification on.

Moermond: replacing the entire frame vs. replacing door and leaving frame.

Imbertson: I believe that's a better question for the building inspector.

Moermond: it doesn't appear to be a building permit issue though.

Imbertson: we would defer to building inspectors for an answer on that. I have a hard time seeing the work could be done for under the \$500 value where a permit is required. Also some question is whether any replacement door slab would be accepted with the existing frame. A fire-rated door is part of an entire assembly, it isn't just the slab (door) itself.

Teekasingh: I checked Menards. They sell the slab by itself. The frame that goes into the wall is \$249. The door itself is \$429 regular price, I purchased one for \$329.

Moermond: what I'm hearing is it would be great for a building inspector to have eyes on this.

Imbertson: in cases where we have questions about whether a permit is required or not we would defer that to the building department. We'd have no extra requirement to have a building permit if you received an answer from building inspections that they didn't need one. We also refer to them for questions about how the work is physically performed on site. When we start to get into particulars about exact materials and construction methods that is a building code question that is outside the scope of our department.

Teekasingh: nothing is being physically touched to the building structure. It is just the slab and the slab being replaced is meeting the required code, as requested.

Moermond: we need to involve the building inspector and what may be helpful is if you have photos you could share of the door and frame itself. The proposed door you've acquired. I think it could probably be handled by photos. We'll get the senior building inspector involved if we need to. Let's copy John Caldwell in the correspondence.

Imbertson: we would have no extra requirements beyond whatever particulars they have.

Teekasingh: what do I need to do to make it an exit, for the rear exit?

Moermond: this just says to remove the sign.

Teekasingh: it is a wooden door that opens inwards not outwards, and has been grandfathered in. The City's been reconfiguring the lots. The neighbor fenced us in on the backside. There's a gate there that they locked, they removed the lock after I asked. I don't know who approved the permit to put the fence there so close to my building.

Moermond: if they even pulled one. Is this back exit a mandatory exit?

Imbertson: it isn't from our assessment. There's no access to a public way and no clear access to left or right to walk around the building. The lock fence wouldn't change the opinion of the door one way or another, it just reinforces why a fire exit isn't allowed to go through a neighboring property without an easement.

Moermond: so correcting this situation is making it NOT an emergency exit, though it can continue to be used as a door.

Teekasingh: it's a lighted sign. I can pull it.

Moermond: the case of it being an allowable emergency exit has to do with not only the swinging door but also the fence and how it blocks egress.

Imbertson: you can't go through someone's property for a required fire exit.

Teekasingh: what if I get them to grant me egress access? To be able to do that?

Moermond: could it exist in the future? Yes, but we don't have that right now.

Teekasingh: I want to know what I need to deal with.

Imbertson: first we'd consider how you'd get access to the public way through your own property. If there's enough space to make a route around the back side of the building, then providing a gate from your fenced in area to the west of the building, if there was a way to get to that side.

Teekasingh: initially there was, but we had people stealing from the lot—

Imbertson: which is likely the same reason your neighbor wants a fence. After the inspection, Brian and I determined that the second exit wasn't required due to the square footage, so there was no further review needed of that door since we'd determined via travel distances and square footage it wasn't a required exit.

Teekasingh: if I remove the sign and don't use the storage room, do you have to come back out?

Imbertson: yes, part of that is to check that the required limits are below necessary levels.

Teekasingh: and if I decided to do the door?

Imbertson: you'd work with the building inspector and then either we would reinspect or check the building permit is closed.

Teekasingh: and if no permits are required?

Imbertson: we'd reinspect.

Teekasingh: right now Brian is scheduled to come back out the 11th.

Moermond: and that's one of the things we can talk about. Wherever you land, how much time do you need to execute the changes which may need to include photos and back and forth emails with Caldwell.

Teekasingh: we're going into the holidays again.

Moermond: we are, so let's take that into consideration.

Teekasingh: I have the door. It is 36". I verified it meant the requirements, it is a 90 minute door, stamped on the door itself. I bought soft close hinges, they're coming in this week. Then I can put the new door in. The door there is an odd size so the door may have to be shortened.

Moermond: Mr. Imbertson, can you compose the email to Mr. Caldwell about the door vs. frame replacement question. We're looking at expediting this so that he can get his Certificate of Occupancy. We'll keep the December 11th reinspection for now.

I'm going to ask that the Fire Certificate of Occupancy be issued with conditions, noting these 2 items need to be done and inspected. Those conditions would have to do with storage in this room, with time certain being February 2nd. The implication for it not being complete is having that Certificate of Occupancy revoked.

Referred to the City Council due back on 12/17/2025

Special Tax Assessments

5 RLH TA 25-469 Ratifying theAppealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 159 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE WEST. (File No. VB2601, Assessment No. 268900)

Sponsors: Bowie

Reduce the assessment from \$2,623 to \$656.

Jaswant Teekasingh, owner, appeared

Staff report by Moermond: we have a Vacant Building fee that is billed prospectively, in this case you went into the program February 12. We had an appeal and in that appeal in February and at that time the Council gave you a 90 day waiver to May 12th. If the work had been done there would have been no fee. We have you coming out of the Vacant Building program a month ago, say November 1. That tells me that of the 12 months in the bill you were in the program eight and a half months approximately. You articulated in your appeal a number of things here.

Teekasingh: Premier Lighting was going to do the permit for the office and the shop. They had a grant through the Chamber of Commerce. That approval was done in November but they couldn't start until January. So they had from January to May to do the work, but when they tried to get the electrical permit it was being blocked by Department of Safety & Inspections. They went to the point where the grant expired and I lost that grant. Collins electrical group was then hired, they tried several times as well.

Moermond: what do you mean blocked?

Teekasingh: they weren't allowed, had to come in person.

Moermond: then they aren't blocked, they just have to be done in person.

Teekasingh: they were being told they had to pay the Vacant Building fee when applying for permit. In addition to the permit

Moermond: when was that?

Teekasingh: that was up until March 12th when I went down. On March 10th I spoke to Mr. Humphrey and apparently the letter came out but no one read the letter from this

office to say what transpired. So everything was being blocked and attached to the property at the time.

I went down and paid the fees for the permit and then it was issued. Mr. Collins company, in order for them to do any work, wanted to see all the electrical so I had to pull all the flooring up to do that. They are a large company and work from March through July to verify that what they were applying for is valid. He called to get the permit closed August 15th. When I presented the information to Ms. Holliday she said the system was hacked and they couldn't do anything with it. So from August 15 to October 15 I was in limbo as to what I needed to do. I sent several emails. I finally got a response from someone in buildings saying I could get the license and it was ok. But apparently whatever was ordered by this office was sent out but according to Mr. Humphrey it wasn't read or applied.

Moermond: and I don't have their records from then.

Teekasingh: I didn't know any of this was going on until Collins sent that text message.

Moermond: clearly the directive from this office was to issue permits. Brian Schmidt was staffing. When did they get their permit?

Teekasingh: the day before the waiver expired.

Moermond: the hearing we had was staffed by Brian Schmidt, part of Mr. Imbertson's team. He's not in the Vacant Building program. Reviewing the minutes there wasn't anyone from the Vacant Building team here. I think it was assumed the Fire Certificate of Occupancy team could cover it. They didn't communicate to the Vacant Building team in a way they understood that a note should be put in the file that permits can be issued.

What you haven't said explicitly, but I'm putting out there for you that your ask is basically a 3 month credit because of the inability to take action, which would roll it back to 5.5 months in the Vacant Building program. Typically, I like to prorate that fee to more to reflect the number of months.

Teekasingh: then another two months with the City being hacked.

Imbertson: obviously, I can't see the old notes in the file, but they can't pull an online permit for a property with a hold on it, so even if there's a note to advise they can override the hold, there is still a hold on the file and they are unable to pull online permits.

Moermond: and it shouldn't have been there.

Imbertson: it should have had a hold---

Moermond: and it shouldn't have. That's part of what the Vacant Building team takes care of, to lift that hold for that period of time. That's what we're doing when we do that waiver. It was covered in the hearing and didn't translate to the computer system. Now let's talk about you saying these failures were tied to the system's hack. Actually no, nothing last spring has to do with that.

Teekasingh: Ms. Holliday said on the date the permit was closed---

*Moermond: the time period wouldn't have been that much; I think the maximum time period the outage would cover is 4- weeks. That is if you would have been ready to go at the end of July. What I'm not hearing is it happened 2 weeks into the service outage, August 15th. A 2 week delay in the building inspection. Business license is entirely different. The permit component I'm not seeing there was *much* of a delay.*

Teekasingh: I spoke to Dan Nizolek, October 17th he sent me a note saying everything is cleared up and I can go buy the license. That's when he said everything pertaining to the Vacant Building was closed. Not as of August 15th. Two months later.

Moermond: no aspect of licensing should have kept you in the Vacant Building program. If it was held up due to Dan and licensing.

Imbertson: I am also not sure what the reasoning was when the Vacant Building program was closed out. We hadn't approved occupancy yet so we weren't involved in that discussion. There was no occupancy or use of building approval when the Vacant Building folder was closed.

Moermond: I'm taking the 8.5 months and deducting the waiver period and also giving time for the closing of the file between August 15th and October 15th. I'm thinking we take you from having a 8.5 time period down to basically 3 months in the program. That brings your Vacant Building fee down to \$656. You would have to file a claim for any financial harm, that's not what I can deal with here.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/14/2026