



# City of Saint Paul

15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

## Minutes - Final

### Legislative Hearings

*Marcia Moermond, Legislative Hearing Officer*  
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Tuesday, September 10, 2024

9:00 AM

Room 330 City Hall & Court House/Remote

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

##### Remove/Repair Orders

- 1     **RLH RR 24-17**     Ordering the rehabilitation or razing and removal of the structures at 887 CHARLES AVENUE within fifteen (15) days after the May 1, 2024, City Council Public Hearing.

Sponsors:     Bowie

*PO to submit evidence of financing, affidavit, work plan including bids and schedule by COB Friday, September 27, 2024.*

*Kyle Runbeck, owner, appeared via phone*

*Runbeck: I had two estimates for electrical. I haven't received one. Yesterday Kelly Plumbing came through and they will give me an estimate, but he wanted to get ahold of the inspector to clarify a couple of items on the list. Boehm heating is coming on the 18th, unless they can get here sooner.*

*Moermond: so, progress in getting some bids. I really need to bring this home. The building items we haven't talked about, are you hiring someone? Doing it yourself?*

*Runbeck: I'm going to find someone for that. I've tried to get ahold of different contractors and no one is getting back to me. I will need to hire at least some of it out.*

*Moermond: so, figure that out too. This has been moving slowly, I know you're trying to get people in and I'm looking at first talking to you in April. I'm looking for you to pull this together in the near future. We'll need the schedule; I do see you submitted information on the financing and it looks to be adequate but we'd need an affidavit for the funds. Today is September 10, I'm inclined to send this to Council September 25 at which point we should have those bids and plans together. That is the Council Public Hearing date, so if you don't have it together by then I'd plan on attending the Council Public Hearing and asking the Council for more time to continue working on this case. I'm fine with that, but it has been long enough I need them to say yes, continue working on it.*

*Runbeck: can that be pushed back beyond the 25? Due to the fact I didn't get the Code Compliance Inspection Report until recently because it didn't get mailed to my*

house. Just my dad's house, who assumed I got a copy. I was in the dark for so long, so that's why I am scrambling for estimates.

Moermond: that's 2 months since it was originated. You didn't provide a lock box for the inspectors until much later than applying for it. I'll push it another week, to October 2.

Runbeck: I appreciate that.

**Referred to the City Council due back on 10/2/2024**

- 2**      **[RLH RR 24-29](#)**      Ordering the rehabilitation or razing and removal of the structures at 291 STINSON STREET within fifteen (15) days after the September 4, 2024, City Council Public Hearing. (September 24, 2024 Legislative Hearing)

**Sponsors:**      Bowie

*Recommend removal within 15 days unless \$5,000 PD is posted and CCIR applied for, then refer back to LH October 8, 2024 at 9 am.*

*Moermond: we've got a couple of issues here. Two weeks ago the daughter of owner was unable to participate because her sister had died, and she reports again this Tuesday am she doesn't have the ability to be in a phone conference until she is released due to a mental health crisis. While I do sympathize, we don't have a Performance Deposit or a Code Compliance Inspection or ownership of the property because it has not been probated. I'll recommend this goes back to Council September 25 and if by September 24 the Performance Deposit is posted and Code Compliance Inspection Report in hand we can ask the Council to refer it back to Legislative Hearing, otherwise we'll close the file.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 9/25/2024**

- 3**      **[RLH RR 24-30](#)**      Ordering the rehabilitation or razing and removal of the structures at 929 YORK AVENUE within fifteen (15) days after the September 18, 2024, City Council Public Hearing.

**Sponsors:**      Yang

*Refer back to LH October 8, 2024 at 9 am if \$5,000 PD is posted no later than COB Monday, September 16, 2024.*

*Alex Delendik, owner o/b/o Homestead Road, appeared via phone*

*Moermond: we do have the Code Compliance Inspection Report from July 28, but we're lacking other things, like the Performance Deposit, work plan, financing, all of that. What is going on with those things?*

*Delendik: I'm working on getting those. You told me you needed the Code Compliance, which is done, detailed deed with the finance information of the funds to do the remodel. It will be a bit more than \$75,000. We want a detailed bid from the general contractor. Will be about \$87,000.*

*Moermond: you are missing the Performance Deposit, which we did talk about and is covered as the first item in the follow up letter on August 16. We also need an affidavit*

*of funds available too. You have a hearing next Wednesday and the minimum I need to ask them for more time is that Performance Deposit to be posted. You are tasked with dealing with that, and it should be done no later than Tuesday of next week, the 17th. When I check the morning of the Council Public Hearing, it should be there. If you don't do that, plan on attending the Council Public Hearing.*

*Delendik: ok. I appreciate the phone call.*

*Moermond: detailed bid is great. The \$75,000 mentioned, we understand the actual cost will be different. Staff ballpark it in broad brushstrokes. They aren't doing bids like you are.*

*Delendik: once I post the \$5,000 Performance Deposit how long do I have to do the rehab?*

*Moermond: you're a Category 3 Vacant Building, my standard recommendation is to grant 180 days for the rehab to be completed.*

*Delendik: that's through winter, so some exterior items may not be feasible. If permits are pulled and clear progress, are there extensions available?*

*Moermond: yes, we talked about this but let me restate for clarity. If you are at 50% or greater at the six-month mark, then that percentage drives how the Performance Deposit is handled and also any extensions of time. It could be if you are 10% done, you can forfeit the Performance Deposit and require another. Continue the Performance Deposit and ask for another \$5,000. A number of options with the Performance Deposit. After those 180 days it at least becomes partially discretionary based on how far completed.*

*[Delendik disconnected and called back in]*

*Moermond: so, get that Performance Deposit posted by the 17th. Additionally, Mr. Yannarely, has the property been maintained?*

*Yannarely: we had one work order for garbage and rubbish in the back by the garage. The Summary Abatement Order went out August 7, the crew cleaned it up August 27th.*

*Delendik: we mow the grass, but people continually dump since it is vacant. I will keep a closer eye on it.*

*Moermond: let me be clear, this property is under a microscope right now. It is a nuisance structure. This is part of the nuisance. I will report as a matter of practice it continues to be an exterior nuisance. If you get that posted, I will ask the Council to send it back to Legislative Hearing October 8 to have the remaining items put together.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 9/18/2024**

## **10:00 a.m. Hearings**

### **Making Finding on Substantial Nuisance Abatements**

4      **RLH RR 24-31**      Making finding on the appealed substantial abatement ordered for 594 BRUNSON AVENUE in Council File RLH RR 24-10.

**Sponsors:**      Noecker

*Recommendation forthcoming pending submission & approval of updated financing, affidavit and work plan/schedule.*

*Elizabeth Sibet, owner, appeared*

*Moermond: last time we spoke we talked about requiring a Performance Deposit, updated financing, work plan. Tell me where things are at.*

*Sibet: I posted the \$5,000. Michelle emailed everything else.*

*Zimny: there's an updated timeline.*

*Moermond: tell me where things are at. We were looking in the letter for updated proof of financing, work plan including a schedule. Are they forthcoming?*

*Sibet: I was never using financing, so there's nothing there.*

*Moermond: using money to pay for the project and had to show money available. We're asking for the same now. That you can finance the project. We need to know there is money for this purpose and an affidavit. Are you using the same contractors?*

*Sibet: yes, he said he was ready to go now.*

*Moermond: it's hard to do this in the moment, it would have been nice to have it Friday as requested. Let's go to Council Public Hearing on September 25. It looks like you've applied for a building permit, but it's been ready to pay and pickup since August 9. I'll review this and get back to you.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 9/25/2024**

5      [RLH RR 24-33](#)      Making finding on the appealed substantial abatement ordered for 1726 FOURTH STREET EAST in Council File RLH RR 23-51.

**Sponsors:**      Johnson

*Grant to January 1, 2025 to complete rehab and continue the \$5,000 PD.*

*Carolyn Brown, property manager, appeared*

*Moermond: do we need to call Mr. Leibovich?*

*Brown: No.*

*Staff update by Supervisor Joe Yannarely: Mr. Zane puts it at 40% complete. Never been any issues at the property.*

*Moermond: electrical permit was finalized?*

*Yannarely: warm air and mechanical are also finalized. Active plumbing.*

*Moermond: so just plumbing and building left. What's the plumbing look like?*

*Brown: 75% complete, they're planning on the inspection next week. Then they'll finish it, and two weeks later do the gutters, which only takes a day.*

*Moermond: what's your timeline? Sounds like remaining items are just building?*

*Brown: he said at least until November 1.*

*Moermond: that's basically 60 days. I'd be more comfortable going to January 1 to be safe. I think the percentage we got, was before isn't where it is now. I'll recommend the Council continues the Performance Deposit, and not require an additional one. This is pretty straightforward.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 9/11/2024**

- 6 RLH TA 24-337** Making finding on the appealed substantial abatement ordered for 1262 MINNEHAHA AVENUE EAST in Council File RLH RR 24-2. (September 24, 2024 Legislative Hearing)

**Sponsors:** Johnson

*Layover to LH September 24, 2024 at 10 am. Recommendation forthcoming pending issuance of CC certificate or % completed by Building Inspector.*

*James Irving appeared via phone*

*Irving: sorry, just in bed with a cold.*

*Moermond: I think we need to do a couple of things. I understand you are rating your progress high, but we do need the building inspector to make that determination. He's the one making that call. That should have been done before today, per the letter you were sent.*

*Irving: yes ma'am. The electrical inspection is Thursday, we were waiting.*

*Moermond: I get that, I'm looking at whether we continue your Performance Deposit or need a new work plan. Your testimony isn't really sufficient. I hope you get things finalized. This has a Council Public Hearing date of September 25. You'll need all of your finals done and I'll review this September 24. If they aren't done, I better have a clean percentage from Mr. Zane.*

*Irving: ok, that sounds good.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 9/25/2024**

## 11:00 a.m. Hearings

### Correction Orders

- 7 RLH CO 24-7** Appeal of Ray Krueger to a Correction Notice, Summary Abatement Order, and Vehicle Abatement Order at 327 MAPLE STREET.

**Sponsors:** Johnson

Grant to October 11, 2024 for compliance with SAO and VAO orders, and item 1 in correction notice, for balance of Correction Notice grant to October 1, 2025 for compliance.

Ray Krueger, owner, appeared via phone

Kreuger: my son in working so it will just be me.

Moermond: you met with the inspector out at the property. She had a chance to review things.

Staff update by Supervisor Lisa Martin: we met Mr. Kreuger and his son this past week and went thorough their questions as far as the silver Honda in the yard, they had a battery charger hooked up but still no tabs or plates. Still not in compliance. They have lots of items on the boulevard, and the City doesn't allow those. We explained that. They wanted to appeal that. We had some deadlines for October for other repairs we talked about last time. Boulevard plantings and Vehicle Abatement Order are the items remaining.

Moermond: thoughts, Mr. Kreuger?

Kreuger: I'm still not a believe I can't store a car on my own property just because there's an issue with the plates. If I have to, to resolve it I can transfer it to my name and get an insurance policy that says it won't be driven. It serves no purpose to pay for plates and tabs, but if that's what you're going to force me to do, I don't want to increase expenses by having it towed.

The idea that edging on a garden is going to impact anyone except to make it look more intentional is disturbing. I did say I was going to look into that further. At present, the boulevard plantings on maple no longer have any borders and we'll fully plant it so there's no need for a border. We'll make sure they're within height requirements. The heights in the original paperwork said 18" within 15 feet and 36" after 30 feet. She was giving different numbers so I would like clarification. I have Lisa's name but I don't have the name of the gentleman with her. She chose to see my son as a threat. He was standing there with pruning shears to resolve anything he could at that moment. She treated it like a machete. He threw it in the yard, but I'd like to know who he was.

Moermond: we have Supervisor of Inspections Lisa Martin and the gentleman was the Deputy Director of Department of Safety & Inspections, David Hoban. Heights and distances are covered thoroughly in the Summary Abatement Order.

Kreuger: I don't want the Summary Abatement Order I want to find it online. I couldn't find it printed online.

Moermond: it says chapter 105 under the nuisance abatement code, chapter 45. Chapter 105 has to do with boulevard plantings.

Kreuger: I still don't know how to find it on the internet. If you could fax me the actual code, that's what I'm looking for please. I want to see for the future and also check historically who sponsored these things to think they were beneficial. In the meantime, I have two attorneys I am talking to and I plan on looking for how this may go in the future. I'm certainly going to make sure I'm better schooled in the rules.

The third point Lisa brought up—

*Moermond: excuse me, you continually call Lisa, but the men you've interacted with as "Inspector". She is a Supervisor and it is "Supervisor Martin".*

*Kreuger: you mean there is terminology I need to use in referencing her or else I'm in violation? That's interesting.*

*Moermond: there's decorum in the hearings and you haven't been observing it. I would appreciate mutual respect.*

*Kreuger: this is the first time you brought it to my attention, how would I know?*

*Moermond: I have let it ride because I thought you'd figure it out.*

*Kreuger: why would I figure it out?*

*Moermond: because other people were speaking that way. Now you know.*

*Kreuger: I didn't mispronounce her name, abuse it in any way, shape, or form and this is the first time. I will try and remember to refer to her as Supervisor Lisa Martin. Is that correct?*

*Moermond: yes, in the same fashion that I refer to you as Mr. Kreuger, consistently. It is mutual respect. We're trying to show it both ways.*

*Kreuger: I didn't mean to show disrespect. I can think of a good case for not intending disrespect. No one had corrected me on how I was using it. I will apologize to her for that, but I didn't have any—I'm not Trump, I'm not calling names.*

*Moermond: we were talking about you needing and wanting sections of code. Certainly, they're at the library, but we'll see what we can put in the mail for you.*

*Kreuger: I'm fine with a location on the internet I can look them up.*

*Moermond: they're in the first paragraph of the letter.*

*Martin: while I was there he asked for code references, and I gave him my exact file and all of that information is listed, including St. Paul Legislative Code section 105.*

*Kreuger: that's the entire text of the code?*

*Moermond: it should be Chapter 105 if you look it up online. I would go straight to the City's website for the charter.*

*Kreuger: what is that exact website?*

*Moermond: [www.stpaul.gov](http://www.stpaul.gov)*

*Kreuger: I found that ok. When I'm trying to read the actual code, I'm not just interested in what I've potentially broken I'm also looking to know what other rules there are so I am educated. This is providing a major set of problems. It gives me cause to want to learn as much as I can. I have been in touch with Mr. Sly Onia who is supposedly a City Attorney who can probably give me that location. I would like to have it. He hasn't returned my calls yet; I don't know if he's on vacation like the rest of you*

were or what.

*Moermond: what are you talking about? That was rude. We're here. We've been working with you.*

*Kreuger: why is it rude? You're working with me but I haven't received any of this Code or any way to read it. I don't see the whole body. I'd like to be able to do that.*

*Moermond: and I just tried to tell you how to locate it on the City's website. It will give you every word in the City Charter and Code.*

*Kreuger: I wasn't able to find it. I will look again. I'm 73 and forgive me if I'm not the greatest with Google and such. I'm doing my best.*

*Moermond: I understand. With respect to the boulevards, have we reached a conclusion? You were talking about not understanding the differences in distances and heights. We just talked about there being specifics in the Summary Abatement Order. Do you have other questions on the Summary Abatement Order?*

*Kreuger: 15 feet from the corner, that takes me back to the telephone pole. The beginning of that garden should be at 18 inches or less.*

*Moermond: my reading isn't 15 feet; it is 30 feet from the intersection. That would be 18 inches or less. That is in the order too.*

*[long silence]*

*Kreuger: third line "plantings within 30 feet of the intersection may not exceed 18 inches" is what is on the Summary Abatement Order. You're saying it isn't what is on this paper, it is actually 36?*

*Moermond: no, that isn't what I said. You said within 15 feet of the intersection and I was clarifying it is within 30 feet.*

*Kreuger: alright. I see that now. The first 30 feet has to be less than 18 inches and after that 36 inches?*

*Moermond: yes, considering driveways and so on.*

*Kreuger: how far from a driveway?*

*Moermond: it is listed in item number 4. Plantings within 5 feet of any alley or driveway may not exceed 18 inches.*

*[long silence]*

*Kreuger: we'll be rototilling all of that and getting that planted I guess. As far as the edging, he's in the process of removing it now. Probably will take him to fall, he doesn't want to kill everything there, just move it. The stuff too tall he is going to take a hedge trimmer too so it is more tolerable.*

*Moermond: so, you are asking for an extension on that, understood.*

*Kreuger: it is in progress. It shouldn't be that long. Week or two at the worst. Where*



are we at with the car?

Moermond: you have to comply with the orders but we haven't landed on a date.

Kreuger: if I have to transfer it to my name so I can put a plate on it so I can pay extra money, you're just beating me up but if that's what your goal is then I will do that.

Moermond: if you have a garage you are welcome to store it inside with no plates and is inoperable. If it is stored outside it has to have those things.

Kreuger: my parking stall is a car and a half deep and two cars wide. There is no front or top on it. Does that qualify?

Martin: that isn't a garage, it is the foundation for an old garage. You can definitely park a vehicle there that has current tabs and it has to be operable.

Kreuger: I'll leave the car where it is, transfer it to my name, and plates in my name.

Moermond: it says it appears undrivable and F. other violation. That's the silver Ford?

Martin: the silver Ford is gone, it was—

Kreuger: if I need to, I can drive it to Cincinnati. That is ridiculous. It has had better days, no question.

Moermond: and the Honda?

Martin: the Honda is parked in the yard and has to be removed. It can be parked on the street or parked on the parking pad.

Kreuger: that is a driveway and does go to a pad. It has poured concrete.

Martin: we did not see an approved pad there. There are some pavers in the yard. We didn't see anything.

Kreuger: I'll send you a picture. There's a driveway. When the City put in the new street I had to put two driveways in, one to access the parking area in the back and the other to handle the parking on the side of the house. It does have poured concrete, I guess you could call them pavers, yes.

Moermond: the Summary Abatement Order and Vehicle Abatement Orders I'm going to recommend to October 11, a month from today, for compliance. We talked a bit about the Correction Order, the buildings itself. When we spoke, we did a faster deadline on the unsafe stairways, and longer for the rest.

For the unsafe stairway mentioned here, we said October 11 when we spoke last. Then October 1 of 2025 for the rest of it, except the porch windows, but we can say October 1 2025 for everything in the Correction Notice aside from the unsafe stairway leading up to the house.

Kreuger: ok. I don't have that in front of me. Can you send me a copy of those dates so I can make sure I have it in my calendar.

Moermond: absolutely, yes. Anything else?

*Kreuger: only that I'm wondering why David felt my son was threatening him. He was not threatening. He was obviously trying to be ready to respond immediately to cut things back. We hoped that was going to more the nature of the encounter.*

*Moermond: Mr. Hoban has been in the business for 30 years and when someone is using garden shears as a pointer towards another human in close proximity—*

*Kreuger: he did not point.*

*Moermond: that isn't my understanding of the situation. Here's the thing, if it were a police officer—*

*Kreuger: he was holding it in his hand at his side.*

*Moermond: and if you're holding a knife—I won't go there. From my understanding it was inappropriate behavior and I'm going to say it isn't impacting what is in front of me now but it will probably impact whether police come for any future enforcement activity to ensure safety of inspectors.*

*Kreuger: funny you should mention that. I would like to ask we have police present for these meetings if your people are so chicken and imagining some attack.*

*Moermond: your son explained in hearing that he is dramatic, he is a person who isn't afraid to share his mind, and interrupt and do other things so it is consistent with that. I have to say my priority is everyone walks away from an inspection safe. Holding something that can be used as a weapon is not ok.*

*Kreuger: my goodness.*

*Moermond: for the inspector's security there will be police accompanying them and if clean-up crews need to be dispatched to execute the orders police will accompany them as well.*

*Kreuger: that's really nice. I'm glad to hear we are going to be escalating things further. Thank you very much.*

*Moermond: have a good rest of your day sir.*

*Kreuger: when can I expect to receive those materials?*

*Moermond: you will get a letter from our office; it goes out on Friday's. Or you can go online and do as I suggested which is a search of the charter and legislative code.*

*Kreuger: I will try that again.*

*Moermond: Summary Abatement Order and Vehicle Abatement Order to October 11 for compliance.*

*We did a faster deadline on the unsafe stairways, we said October 11.*

*Then October 1, 2025 for the balance of the orders. A significant extension on that.*

*Kreuger: I don't have that in front of me, can you send me a copy?*

*Moermond: absolutely.*

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Referred to the City Council due back on 9/25/2024

### Summary & Vehicle Abatement Orders

- 8 [RLH SAO 24-34](#) Appeal of Gonzalo R. Sanchez to a Summary Abatement Order at 1040 BUSH AVENUE.

Sponsors: Yang

*Layover to LH September 24, 2024 at 11 am to review work plan.*

*Gonzalo Sanchez, owner, appeared via phone*

*Moermond: we're asking if you can be patient with us for another couple of weeks? Lisa hasn't had time to meet with the inspectors to create that plan.*

*Sanchez: yes.*

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 9/24/2024

- 9 **RLH SAO 24-61** Appeal of Mark Puchala II to a Notice to Cut Tall Grass and/or Weeds at 2016 FREMONT AVENUE.

Sponsors: Johnson

*Grant to October 4, 2024 for compliance.*

*Mark Puchala, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: Summary Abatement Order for tall grass and weeds was sent on August 14. The grass and weeds were over 16" at the time photos taken. Appeal was filed, so we have not been back out.*

*Puchala: much of why I'm filing the appeal is to figure out how all of this work. My mother has been deceased since 2020. I don't know where to go to tell them I'm the owner and they don't have to keep mailing her. Second, I just got off the phone yesterday with the watershed district for getting inspection for native habitat restoration. I have found, especially when talking with master gardener it may be native and valuable. My main reason for letting it grow out is I have been to document what is there, what is helpful, what is native. It is hard to do that when its below 8". She said I'd have my interview in 2 to 3 weeks. I'd like to let my yard continue to grow. I'm trying to cut down the ones I am determining to be harmful. Is there an option to have this again in 3 weeks when I'm more informed with what the habitat restoration would require.*

*Moermond: we can help with some of that. State law defines what is allowed quite clearly. This looks like a turf grass lawn that has gone to weed. This needs to be down and mowed by October 4.*

*Puchala: that is generous, I'm sure I can do what I need to do before then.*

Referred to the City Council due back on 10/2/2024

10 RLH SAO  
24-62

Appeal of Karen Nowak to a Summary Abatement Order at 121 CURTICE STREET EAST.

Sponsors: Noecker

*Grant to October 11, 2024 for compliance.*

*Karen Nowak, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: August 21, 2024 a Summary Abatement Order was issued to cut, remove, and dispose of all the vegetation hanging into the alley right-of-way. Alleys must be cleared edge to edge and up to 14 feet in height. Compliance date was for August 27. A lot of our garbage trucks have a difficult time getting down the alleys due to overgrown vegetation. Photo is in the Summary Abatement Order.*

*Nowak: that wall was put in when the City upgraded that alley. That was before my time, I've been here 57 years. I was under the impression everything on the other side of the wall belonged to the City.*

*Moermond: that isn't quite right. I'm pulling up an aerial map.*

*Nowak: I've been clearing the alley for years. Now I'm 80 and it is getting hard. I went out to do something and he said I don't have to do that; it is City property.*

*Moermond: the neighbor isn't right. The alley and the sidewalk, boulevard, are all cases where it is your property. Half the alley, the sidewalk, the boulevard. Your property but there is an expectation you maintain it clear for people. Shoveling the walk, those types of things. You only pay taxes on your immediate property, but any right-of-way you are still responsible for maintaining it.*

*Nowak: it kind of makes sense. You are saying that half the alley towards my property I have to maintain?*

*Moermond: yes.*

*Nowak: the other part of the alley, on the other side they take care of theirs. I never use the alley; I have no reason to. I know it is used, don't get me wrong. I just wanted clarification because the wall belongs to the City.*

*Moermond: actually, that wall belongs to you. The City doesn't have any retaining wall except for rare instances where there are supporting bridges or large hills on City property. All private property retaining walls are just that.*

*Nowak: that isn't what they told me.*

*Moermond: they were wrong.*

*Nowak: I know years ago the City had a problem with someone with a retaining wall and they were fighting who it belonged to. I thought it was the City's when they opened up that alley because my house sits higher than the alley.*

*Moermond: I appreciate there was a misunderstanding about it. Not only does it not*

*have walls like that, but there is also a principle that says the property on the higher ground, which is you, is responsible for retaining your soils so they don't go into an adjacent property. Knowing all of this, what do you think about cutting that vegetation back?*

*Nowak: you were saying something about the vegetation over the driveway, which I cleaned out, but I was waiting to find out the scenario for the stuff from the ground in the alley.*

*Moermond: whether it is growing from the alley height or the retaining wall I won't concern myself with. Any part of any plant there should not be blocking the right-of-way. It all needs to be cleared back so vehicles can get through.*

*Martin: we don't want vehicles to be scratched.*

*Nowak: I can't move as well; it has been tough. I get what you are telling me. It clues me in. Can you give me a few weeks to clear this out?*

*Moermond: absolutely. What are you thinking? Sounds like you need to find some help.*

*Nowak: can you give me a month?*

*Moermond: absolutely. I'll recommend the Council give to October 11.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 9/25/2024**

#### Orders To Vacate - Code Enforcement

- 11 [RLH VO 24-31](#) Appeal of Donald A. Hinrichs to a Notice of Condemnation as Unfit for Human Habitation & Order to Vacate, Notice to Cut Tall Grass and/or Weeds, and Summary Abatement Order at 995 WAKEFIELD AVENUE.

**Sponsors:** Johnson

*Layover to LH September 17, 2024 at 11 am for further discussion after inspection.*

*Donald & Tashawna Hinrichs appeared*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: September 3 a notice of condemnation was issued to owners at 995 Wakefield. We have 4 items on the condemnation. Vacate date of September 5. We also had some pets in the home, 3 dogs licensed, 2 dogs pending. We also have a tall grass and weed letter, also overhanging vegetation and also an exterior complaint. The condemnation was put on the garage since the gate was closed with a sign that says beware of dogs. They had something for a dead tree that went to forestry, so nothing current I have there. I did notice the information missing from orders I see a lot of collection of items. Typically, that is listed in the letter to contact them. They have a lot of resources.*

*Moermond: can you talk more about the sanitation issues leading to the condemnation. Parts of the house appear to have high content.*

*Martin: I don't think Inspector Williams was able to get through the entire house. It is for us to determine things like how many dumpsters you may need if you income qualify. Mr. Williams said they were easy to work with, and we just need a plan. House Calls would be a great start.*

*Moermond: the biggest thing is the sanitation, four issues listed.*

*D Hinrichs: we had potty training issues with 3 of the dogs, they're young. We removed all the carpet and started cleaning it with enzyme destroyer. The porch that appeared horded is 99% cleaned, it was mostly donations for her rescue. I have started on the bushes. Her uncle and I bought the house, and he moved to take care of his mom and so he took everything but the mower. I did get a weed whip and trimmer last week. Some of the higher stuff I'll have to get a ladder for the higher stuff. I have mowed the area outside the fence. We didn't know there was hardwood floor underneath, it has been going well.*

*Martin: are there other animals?*

*D Hinrichs s: we have a 501c3 animal rescue. We got all 5 dogs licensed. We've scaled down the rescue, and stopped taking animals in.*

*T Hinrichs: 1 rabbit, 3 guinea pigs, a hedgehog. 50 rats approximately. Someone is taking 10-12 within the next week. Ferrets, 2 are being adopted in 2 weeks. Sixteen ferrets.*

*Moermond: tell me more about the tall grass and weeds.*

*D Hinrichs: I have photos.*

*Moermond: I'm thinking home occupation and zoning with the rehab.*

*D Hinrichs: 2 younger officers came last year when we applied for the nonprofit status.*

*T Hinrichs: I had tons of rats at that time and probably 12 rabbits. There were more at that time than now.*

*Moermond: the front porch cleaned out 80-90%. Boulevard mowed and vegetation on the sidewalk 95% compliance.*

*D Hinrichs: I still have to mow the inside of the yard. The lawnmower is old. We're looking for a new one.*

*Moermond: we can put both the lawn mowing and overhanging vegetation on the same deadline. September 24 deadline for that. The dead tree.*

*D Hinrichs: this is the first I've heard of it. We're also behind on the mortgage.*

*Moermond: how long?*

*D Hinrichs: a few months. No notice of foreclosure yet.*

*Moermond: are you working on getting an income now?*

*D Hinrichs: yes. We both work.*

*Moermond: reach out to HomeLine, their information should be in that brochure. In terms of a ladder, I believe you can rent them too.*

*Martin: the issue with a lot of these types of animals is they keep reproducing.*

*D Hinrichs: the ferrets are all fixed.*

*T Hinrichs: I'm very careful to keep everyone separated.*

*Martin: has animal control been in?*

*D Hinrichs: they were last year.*

*Moermond: so, the carpet is up.*

*D Hinrichs: living room is up, we're assessing downstairs and upstairs. We have a rug doctor. The living room was the worst though, and that is all up.*

*Moermond: part of the baseline is you are struggling financially. We have the licensing issue with the animals. We do need animal control in there sooner than later. I'd like them in this week. I consider this high priority since it was an immediate vacate. We've made progress in the week, but I need a better gauge in order to work with you and create a plan with expectations.*

**Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 9/17/2024**

**Making Finding on Nuisance Abatements**

- 12 RLH SAO 24-60** Making finding on the appealed nuisance abatement ordered for 1941 STANFORD AVENUE in Council File RLH SAO 24-53.

**Sponsors:** Jost

*The nuisance is not abated.*

*Voicemail left at 1:14 pm: this is Marcia Moermond from St. Paul City Council calling you about the Summary Abatement Order for your property, the vegetation issues and height by intersection. What I have is a note from the inspector indicating the tall vegetation in the alley was cut but have not been reduced to 18" in height within 30 feet of the corner. I have to send this to Council, and we'll put it in front of Council September 25 and if it isn't done by then the Department will be authorized to finish the work.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 9/25/2024**

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

**Vacant Building Registrations**

- 13 RLH VBR 24-55** Appeal of Javonna McCoy to a Vacant Building Registration Fee at 1033 MARYLAND AVENUE EAST.

Sponsors: Yang

*Deny the appeal, make property a Cat 1 VB and allow permits to be pulled.*

*Javonna McCoy, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Matt Dornfeld: this entered the Vacant Building program as a Category 1 fire file May 2, 2024 per a form 4 referral from the St. Paul Fire Department. Department of Safety & Inspections received the Vacant Building registration form requesting the 90-day waiver in May. No permits on file. It has been vacant, secure, and maintained. As of August 26, 2024 Inspector Scheffer requested this property be upgraded to a Category 2 Vacant Building due to the property being in the program for 90 days with no pulled permits.*

*Moermond: is it typical that permits would be pulled in the first 90 days after a fire? It seems it usually takes longer due to insurance ad contractors?*

*Dornfeld: in my experience, it is rare for a property with significant fire damage to get turned around within even 12 months.*

*Moermond: Ms. McCoy, why are you appealing?*

*McCoy: I don't know why the City would charge someone who went thorough this kind of traumatic experience within days. I am St. Paul born and raised. I am ashamed of my City. I'm paying property taxes and such a huge life change. Why would you ask us to pay for more? The City isn't doing any maintenance at my house. I'm there every day. They deserve \$2,400 just because they are the City. My insurance guy said he's never heard of anything like this. It is ridiculous and so hurtful. I'm a second-generation St. Paul person, I'm embarrassed and pissed off. I shouldn't have to take time out of my day to do this. I work for Ramsey County, they're the one losing my time while I do this. The City probably owes me. The other thing is, we want to move home. We have smoke damage, not fire damage. Everything is a fight with insurance. I just hired a contractor last week, who is talking to my insurance guy. They're supposed to start next week. Something about a wall.*

*Moermond: sounds positive with how close you are to pulling permits. Who is your contractor and your insurance?*

*McCoy: Eric at American Family and I just hired Sunshine, a guy named Steve, as my contractor.*

*Moermond: we can certainly share Vacant Building information with your insurance guy. Minneapolis has a similar program, but I know that doesn't make it feel any better.*

*McCoy: I'm not paying anything for it. I have to pay for my house to be fixed. I just lost a daughter I have to pay furlough for.*

*Moermond: you don't have to pay it at all. My suggestion is you don't pay it while you move forward. I think your insurance company should cover it.*

*McCoy: they don't cover it at all. The insurance guy said it was my fault I got it.*

*Moermond: that's bologna. We can give some guidance on that. If we let this float to*



assessment, we can prorate it.

*McCoy: to zero dollars and zero cents? I dropped the paper off to give me 90 days. I've got another 90 days of extensions and I can't give the City anything else. I can't afford it. I don't know what the goal is, do you want me to be homeless. I see the inspector drive by in the gray car. He never has to stop. I won't give the City \$2,500 because I had a fire in my house. I can't afford it.*

*Moermond: I hear you. What I was going to say is, happy to work with the insurance situation there. In terms of getting this cut down, if it gets approved I'd recommend proration if you're done in six months.*

*McCoy: I'll put the house up for Sale. I won't give the City another dime. Someone was just shot in front of my house a couple of hours. If I walk outside downtown I'm accosted by all the homeless people. You don't deserve any extra money. The City gives to those who don't want to go out and work and take from those who do. How do you charge someone who is already going through a lot. Now I have people calling all the time asking to buy myself. No, I am not agreeing to \$1 extra. The City doesn't deserve anything, not even the taxes I pay. No. I am not. I understand the boarding assessment. Someone had to put the boards up. \$2,400 because my house is getting worked on? No. We're there every day.*

*I reached out to the City, there was no funds. I called NeighborWorks and he said his waiting list is so long I'd probably be homeless by the time my name came up. He was rude. Who says that? The City is giving me nothing. I just buried my daughter. I don't have extra money to pay for this.*

*Moermond: and I'm so sorry to hear about your loss, as well as the violence in front of your house today. Both death and fire are such traumatic experiences. I want to figure out how to make this better, part of this may be you sharing your message with the Council and how this is impacting your life.*

*McCoy: I already signed the paper that extends our three months, then I have to go sign the paper over again in 3 months. Do I need you? Are you a waste of my time? I think you are.*

*Moermond: I don't intend to waste your time. I am completely unaware of any option to do a second extension through the Department. They may have accepted paperwork but I don't think under the law they can do a six months of a waiver.*

*McCoy: the City inspector guy told me he could as well.*

*Dornfeld: I did not see a waiver in place this morning.*

*McCoy: I dropped it off at your office. A lady took it from me at the desk on Jackson Street. That was on August 24, in the morning.*

*Moermond: there is no legal path for Department of Safety & Inspections to do a second extension, it would happen here. It isn't that I'm wasting your time today.*

*McCoy: I will leave this City and tell everyone about it before I pay the City \$2,400. I just refuse. For what? What is it for? What am I getting for \$2,400? Is it just giving someone \$2,400? Because I could walk outside and give a homeless person \$2,400 who could probably use it more than the City. Why would I do that? Because we had a*

*fire at our house?*

*Moermond: the Vacant Building program covers all Vacant Buildings--*

*McCoy: it does nothing.*

*Moermond: I don't know if you want me to answer your question, or do you just want to express your feelings to me?*

*McCoy: I do want you to answer so I can see where it helps me, because it does nothing for me.*

*Moermond: the cost is divided evenly among all the Vacant Buildings, and 75% of the cost of running the program is recovered through those fees. That includes evenly splitting it; so buildings that get hardly any services and includes ones that need a lot. That formula, you are experiencing it as being unfair; I hear you. You should share that perspective. You are saying "I haven't needed anything; I see the guy go by." I understand.*

*McCoy: so, it does nothing. Nothing is what you said. Please tell me what it does.*

*Dornfeld: there are approximately 500 Vacant Buildings in St. Paul right now, that we know of. Of those 500, there's a percentage that are a tremendous blight and nuisance to the City. They are the buildings that have graffiti, illegal dumping, drug sales, prostitution, illegal trespassing, loitering. Since those Vacant Buildings take up a lot of our time and funds, the Vacant Building fee in general is to help with those. All Vacant Buildings get painted with the same brush. We can't just pick individual buildings. Once you're in the program, you're in, and everyone gets hit with the same fee.*

*McCoy: how do I get out of the program?*

*Dornfeld: that crazy fee, to your point, is probably not for you, but you are in the program and thus have to pay it. I'm not disagreeing with your stance or why you are here. I'm trying to explain what the fee is for; I want you to understand. There are 100 Vacant Buildings that are a tremendous blight and part of the reason why the City has become more violent. That's where the fee goes.*

*McCoy: ok, so it still has nothing to do with me. How do get my property off that list? Can we call my contractor and he tell you he will request to take my name off the list? Yeah, this isn't gonna work. I don't need any of your services that you are offering. I've got someone doing the work. He is trying to get the City out to tell him what he needs to furr a wall or something before he starts. We can add him to this call. I need my name off this list.*

*Dornfeld: as soon as you pull the permits and do the work and get them closed, you're out of the Vacant Building program. Once it is legally habitable again.*

*McCoy: it has to be completely done to come off your list that is doing nothing for me except for getting me calls?*

*Dornfeld: your house was condemned, therefore uninhabitable. We can't legally let you back in there until we deem it safe. In order for that to happen, you have to pull the permits and do the work. Then you're out of the program. I'd love nothing more for that to happen to you.*

*McCoy: can the City pay my mortgage for me too? Who can I send my mortgage bill too?*

*Dornfeld: we don't pay mortgages, no.*

*McCoy: mmm, so I get nothing again. I'm going to call my insurance guy so he can talk to you. You can tell him what that fee is, because he doesn't understand. He says it isn't a real fee, and if it is my fault for some reason.*

*Dornfeld: certainly. They can call me on my cell at [number given].*

*McCoy: Matt, after you talk to these people and they get whatever they need you can take me off the list? For one, I have people calling me all the time asking to buy my house. Second, with these fees and the way the City does things, they can have it. This is ridiculous. The crime. All of it and you get nothing out of it except bills. People have a fire and you tell them you're going to fine them and put them in jail if they don't pay? What a horsesh\*t City. I'm ashamed to say I was born here. I ashamed of this City, it is a disgrace. I'm going to send Steve a message and call the insurance man.*

*Now, where do I go for the hearing so I can tell them what I think about them too?*

*Moermond: we'll send you a follow up letter. Your case goes to the City Council. The letter will go via email on Friday.*

*McCoy: no, it can go to 1033 Maryland.*

*Moermond: we will do that, by USPS. You don't want a backup to your email?*

*McCoy: sure, you can, but send it in the mail. I'm about to burn every penny I can from the City from now on. They can pay for the stamp and the envelope.*

*Moermond: no problem for me.*

*McCoy: I bet.*

*Moermond: Mr. Dornfeld, of course permits should be issued without have the Vacant Building fee paid. We'll push that so we can have those conversations with insurance and contractors and so on. We'll send this to Council October 2.*

*McCoy: that works. Boy, I hope none of you are up for elections, because I am out here. What day?*

*Moermond: Wednesday, October 2 at 3:30. The letter will confirm those details.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 10/2/2024**

**1:30 p.m. Hearings (NONE)**

**2:00 p.m. Hearings**

**Fire Certificates of Occupancy**

**14 RLH FCO  
24-86**

Appeal of Jaswant Teekasingh to a Fire Certificate of Occupancy  
Correction Notice at 159 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE WEST.

Sponsors: Bowie

*Grant to October 11, 2024 for compliance.*

*Jaswant "Jas" Teekasingh, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Der Vue: this is a commercial property. The Fire Certificate of Occupancy was approved with corrections August 15, 2024. The only remaining deficiency was the ceiling with some water damage. This is an open building permit for the replacement of the sheetrock ceiling.*

*Moermond: the inspector said the ceiling needed to be complete with a final inspection before September 6, 2024. Why are you appealing Mr. Teekasingh?*

*Teekasingh: I'm working on it. Basically, I have to get the Fire Inspection done for the extinguisher, which I did. It took me a month to get someone in to pump the pit. I've been here since 1999 and done accordingly. Every time I get a letter from this inspector it is something threatening. I pulled the permit, paid the fee, working on it, then I have to have it done within a week? Ever since February something keeps popping up because someone is complaining about me. I don't know who is doing the complaining. I feel like I'm being singled out.*

*Moermond: the first sentence of the letter says it was August 22 in response to a complaint. I think that's a problem with the form letter, I don't see a complaint in the record. I just see a reinspection in the notes.*

*Vue: you are correct. I'd like to clarify. The open orders are stemming from the Fire Certificate of Occupancy renewal inspection. That started April of 2024. The ceiling was part of that notice, and the only thing left, so it approved the certificate. What happens in our system, it sends the one remaining deficiency to a different folder as a referral which is categorized as a complaint, though technically it isn't.*

*Teekasingh: I went to pull a permit, but the letter tells me I have to close it by last Friday. I thought I had enough time, when I spoke to the building inspector Thursday, she told me I had to buy Fire Rated drywall. So, I had to return that and repurchase. I'm working on this, but the letter tells me I have a deadline regardless of what permits or what I'm doing.*

*Moermond: you can be in there while this gets resolved. I'm just worrying about the ceiling because that's what the orders say. What are you thinking in terms of timeline?*

*Teekasingh: as soon as I can. What disheartened me is I thought he and I had an understanding then I get a letter threatening to shut me down completely. It was harsher and more penalizing than what we discussed.*

*Moermond: I'm looking at giving through October 4, but I'll say October 11 with the building inspector's sign off. That permit closed means you're good, inspector Schmidt won't have to visit again.*

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Referred to the City Council due back on 9/25/2024

### 3:00 p.m. Hearings

#### Other - Fence

- 15 [RLH OA 24-9](#) Appeal of Brittany Kubes to a denial of a Request for Fence Variance at 247 FINN STREET SOUTH.

**Sponsors:** Jost

*Grant a 1-ft variance on condition that fencing is open and visible and any plantings installed are no higher than 18 inches within 30 ft of the intersection.*

*Brittany Kubes, owner, appeared*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Nathan Bruhn: the variance was denied due to the fact it didn't meet one of the three requirements for allowing a variance: site, terrain, or nuisance animal conditions. Your own pet isn't a nuisance animal, it has to be something out of your property's control. That is why it was denied.*

*Moermond: from the diagram, it would be the side yard and front yard included in the 5' fenced area. Without a variance you could already do the side yards at the 5' height.*

*Kubes: I do understand the variance reasons. I'm not worried about animals coming in. There's no backyard and it is a really busy street, with no stop sign on St. Clair. Feels like a highway. I tried to get them to put a stop sign in. I have a 5-year-old and a shelter dog that is very nervous and jumpy. That's why I want 5' fence. The nature of the yard, the spaces are so tiny wrapping one piece in 5' would be difficult.*

*Moermond: Mr. Bruhn, this is a corner property. Are there special regulations about fences and corners?*

*Bruhn: they don't really apply since it isn't a privacy fence. Those restrictions wouldn't apply.*

*Moermond: it is open, just no shrubs or something that would prevent visibility in that corner.*

*Kubes: I understand.*

*Moermond: you don't have a backyard?*

*Kubes: the backyard is my neighbor's property. There is no space behind my house. My garage is against the alley, but my back door has a foot of space and it is my neighbor's property. She has a fence there.*

*Moermond: I'm feeling pretty comfortable about recommending the granting of a 1' variance for the side yard and front, to the south of the front door. Less comfortable with the side yard and front to the north of the front door. Between garage and house, I'm comfortable with. Mr. Bruhn?*

*Bruhn: the building code doesn't care about a fence under 5'. We get concerned about 7. The State building code, City code sets a 4' standard. 5' fence won't be a visual impact with this type of fence. Not a safety hazard. I would be fine with it, but I don't have the power to grant it. Department of Safety & Inspections' opinion is we wouldn't object.*

*Moermond: I'd like to hang some conditions because once that variance exists, it exists. I'd like to attach the condition it has to be an open fence visually such as a chain link or hog wire fence that doesn't provide a visual obstruction, for the portion closest to the intersection. Also, no plantings near the corner within 30' that would obscure the view.*

*Bruhn: we'd say 10' from the corner of the lot line, where the sidewalks intersect.*

*Moermond: we'll send a letter and repeat all of this. I'm comfortable with the open fencing be a condition on the variance and we don't have plantings installed that obscure view more than 18" within 30' of the intersection we can recommend granting the variance.*

**Referred to the City Council due back on 9/18/2024**