



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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December 23, 2011

Judge Gregg Johnson
Ramsey County Courthouse - Room 1230
15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Re: Saint Paul City Council Public Hearing on 1205-1225 Westminster Street
Court File No.62-CV-11-7462

Dear Judge Johnson:

Please be advised that on December 21, 2011, the Saint Paul City Council adopted the following resolution:

“Resolved, the City Council of the City of Saint Paul, being fully advised of the premises, finds it to be in the public interest for a receiver to be appointed for 1205 and 1225 Westminster Street, Saint Paul; and

Further Resolved, that the Legislative Hearing Officer is authorized and directed to communicate this resolution to the court.”

By way of background, I am the Saint Paul City Council’s Legislative Hearing Officer and Senior Policy Analyst. In that capacity, I attended the city council’s meeting December 21, 2011. A public hearing was held to consider the appeal of Mireya Santamaria, tenant of 1225 Westminster Street, on Fire Certificate of Occupancy Correction orders affecting her unit. I provided a staff report outlining my findings and recommendation in this matter.

During the conduct of this hearing, testimony was received from Ms. Santamaria, as well as fellow tenants, Halimaa Ek, Jessica Villareal and Aleda Santosa. Additional testimony was provided by Michael Holloway of Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, who represents 3 of the building’s tenants; Andrew Holly of Dorsey Whitney, who represents Wells Fargo, Ricardo Cervantes, Director of the City’s Safety and Inspections Department and Assistant Fire Marshal Philip Owens.



Testimony included tenant statements that promises of needed repairs were not kept. The evidence considered by the City Council included inspection reports and photographs of the properties.

City staff indicated that after the initial Legislative Hearing of Mireya Santamaria's appeal, they were sufficiently concerned about conditions that a team of fire inspectors was deployed to review conditions at the entire property. All of the complexes' 66 units, garages, common spaces and grounds were inspected. This inspection yielded 312 ordered corrections for 1225 Westminster Street and 259 ordered corrections for 1205 Westminster Street, which places this building among the worst the senior inspection staff has seen.

The Council deliberated on this matter at some length and concluded that given the City's lengthy experience with the non-performance of Peggy and Randall Chun, with even the most basic maintenance of 1205 and 1225 Westminster, it was very unlikely there would be adequate repairs made to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the buildings' occupants. The sense of the Council was that the appointment of a receiver could lead to the development of a comprehensive plan for the repair of these buildings which could be executed by a professional property management company.

Sincerely,



Marcia Moermond
Legislative Hearing Officer

Cc: Saint Paul City Councilmembers