



City of Saint Paul

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Minutes - Final

Legislative Hearings

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Tuesday, September 30, 2025

9:00 AM

Room 330 City Hall & Court House/Remote

9:00 a.m. Hearings

Remove/Repair Orders

- 1 [RLH RR 25-30](#) Ordering the rehabilitation or razing and removal of the structures at 499 SNELLING AVENUE NORTH within fifteen (15) days after the November 5, 2025, City Council Public Hearing.

Sponsors: Coleman

Layover to LH October 28, 2025. Recommend removal within 15 days with no option to repair subject to revision following review of additional submitted materials.

*Andrew Dosdall, attorney o/b/o lessee, CVS, appeared
Various residents spoke (names noted below)*

[Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor James Hoffman: The building is a one story, wood frame and brick, commercial building (CVS) on a lot of 18,121 square feet. The Fire Certificate of Occupancy was revoked on May 6, 2022, and the property was referred to Vacant Buildings with files opened on July 21, 2022. The current property owner is SCP 2005 C21 045 LLC, per AMANDA and Ramsey County Property records.

On July 25, 2025, an inspection of the building was conducted, a list of deficiencies which constitute a nuisance condition was developed and photographs were taken. An Order to Abate a Nuisance Building was posted on August 8, 2025, with a compliance date of August 23, 2025. As of this date, the property remains in a condition which comprises a nuisance as defined by the legislative code. Taxation has placed an estimated market value of \$634,000 on the land and \$2,392,100 on the building. Real estate taxes are current. The vacant building registration fees are due and owing as of July 21, 2025. As of September 29, 2025, a Team Inspection has not been done. As of September 29, 2025, the \$5,000 performance deposit has not been posted.

There has been a minimum of ten Summary Abatement notes since 2022; however, actual number is unknown. There have been thirteen work orders issued for: garbage/rubbish, boarding/securing, and graffiti. Code Enforcement Officers estimate the cost to repair this structure exceeds \$200,000. The estimated cost to demolish exceeds \$100,000.

Moermond: the value on the building you stated was \$634,000 which hasn't been updated more than likely and isn't current market value?

Hoffman: correct.

*Moermond: when you say a *minimum* of 10 Summary Abatement Orders---often there is an exact amount---guessing that due to the system being down we can't get to notes in the old Amanda system and the new Paulie system doesn't have historic notes yet?*

Hoffman: correct, due to the cyber-attack we are going off what we have available in our paper records.

Moermond: there were a lot of proactive visits by Code Enforcement and Police, I assume those don't show up as inspections per se, they'd show up in different ways and wouldn't be in this head count either?

Hoffman: correct, this would simply be what is in the Vacant Building file we maintain.

Moermond: I wanted to restate the last thing you said, about Department of Safety & Inspections asking for an order to repair or remove the structure. The key thing is we are trying to abate the nuisance condition. That happens one of two ways, made habitable again with a new Certificate of Occupancy, or demolished. I will be listening for that as this conversation progresses. I need to abate it; I don't care which way. I just have to get it to the other side so it isn't a nuisance building anymore.

Dosdall: I don't have a lot of backstory. There is a multi-year lease. CVS has been working with David Hoban and Nicole Newmann to find a salutation. CVS remains to try and find a solution, but unfortunately there's nothing specific I can report.

Moermond: are you an executive at CVS? An attorney? What is your role?

Dosdall: I'm attorney with Taft Law Firm.

Moermond: Nicole Newman is no longer with the City; the new interim director is Melanie McMahon. What was the nature of those conversations?

Dosdall: ideally they'd find another lessee, but as far as I know there are no specifics I can report in terms of those conversations.

Moermond: a remote owner, in terms of CVS would it be a sublessee of CVS or would it conclude the lease with the Spokane LLC and have them find something else?

Dosdall: my sense is all options are on the table, but I don't know what specifics have been discussed.

Moermond: we don't have ownership here. People who have been notified do include the owner, Wells Fargo, a couple CVS locations. The expectation in code is notification should be provided in 2 ways, via first class mail and posting the building with the notice of hearing and pending orders. Those did happen. I often see personal service to individuals but that isn't always true with corporations. No mail was returned.

Moermond: we will assume anyone who provides an email address will be include in correspondence moving forward. You can find all the records online, including the

attachments. You can always track what is submitted there. As soon as we're gone today that record will be down for a bit while minutes are added in. Once they're done they'll be up again.

Moishe Wyskiel: I've been a member of the Hamline-Midway community for 3 years. Organizer at Zion Community commons. I've supportive of abating through demolition. I walk by all the time. It doesn't inspire a lot of beauty in the first place, and it is in disrepair. I'd like to see the community demand the space be used for community purposes. As the area loses more of its food resources. I'd like to see that space be used in a way that benefits Hamline-Midway, not just the larger economic interests. As this moves forward and we see the building hopefully go away, the community gets a large say in how it is used to benefit the neighborhood itself.

Moermond: as I was reading through the correspondence, I need to look at the nuisance condition presented and that is what is connected to potential enforcement the City takes. As much as I am interested in Urban planning, that isn't his discussion now. That cannot be part of the considerations today on what we do now with this. That's just so you know where I come from in considering. I can look at the extent to which it is a nuisance. [defines legislative code 35.02 and attractive nuisances] That is where you find where those are characterized and the reference. What makes it a nuisance building isn't going to be what makes it savable. Defining as a nuisance is all the negative things we're doing now. Getting it to be not a nuisance under City code is getting that Certificate of Occupancy. Up and running with signoffs. There's no in-between place in the gray. You're either done or not done.

Wyskiel: again, supportive of the abatement through demolition.

Justin Lewandowski: I'd like to start with a quick question about the costs mentioned?

Moermond: I can dial that in. Demolition is a bit easier because we've done a number of these and can usually ballpark the cost. There may be hazardous materials abatement, which because this business is relatively new I don't expect. The cost of getting it habitable depends entirely on the use and the bids. If someone wants to fix it we want bids, a scope of work detailing from now to complete. The amount of money is the amount of money their bids and contracts require. So, if it says 2.5 million to fix, we need to see that money, in an account available.

Lewandowski: I'd like to reiterate what Moishe said. I'd like to speak my experience and the work of the Hamline-Midway Coalition. We had to create a reporting system to help neighbors to contact Department of Safety & Inspection. We have them make the call, especially around the CVS building, and then we also track that. This is because the very nature of that building has become a public health crisis. Right now, it looks like an internment camp CVS. Before the fence went up there was 100's of bags of trash. Literally a ton of trash, in addition to the couch and furniture that has been collected over the years. The number of sharps and foils, human waste, finding them at the greenlight station blocks in both directions, with that being the central hub. We know that Department of Safety & Inspections gets 80,000 calls and emails a year. We know abatement won't be swift, but our experience with the graffiti and the trash and needles? The abatement process has taken a very long time. I was eager to hear someone had been assigned to this site, I believe his name is Jason. We were told there would be running abatements and the last time there was graffiti on the building it took several weeks.

We've lost business at Sprucetree Center. It is at about 50% capacity. The outward

appearance has been driving away economic growth. The lack of outside care and maintenance has been distressing. Because we office out of the Sprucetree we watched the HVAC system be destroyed. I have deep concerns about what that space looks like inside and how it has been used. With speculative holding and the United Village development coming up, I don't believe the people would do anything other than the bare minimum and keep holding the property until it fits their needs and not the neighborhood's. Demolition I believe is the best course of action for that parcel, simply based on the lack of trust and faith we have in the "SLCP00 whatever numbers and letters" from Spokane Washington. The building itself no longer serves the needs of the community. It really has taken ah it on morale. It is one of the busiest intersections in St. Paul and when you hear stories about the Midway, that's the first building that comes to mind. It is a travesty and I think it should be demolished.

Moermond: Mr. Hoffman, there have been delays since July in response at least, tell us what has happened?

Hoffman: especially since end of July we didn't have phones, not even internally. It was all proactive. Any abatement orders are written by hand, mailed out, same with work orders. Things are moving slower than we like. We're trying to remedy this as soon as possible.

Moermond: half of your people are assigned to that end, so you are also short staffed as people work on the system replacement. Yes, I'm being an apologist, but here is what going on. As I look at nuisances and chronic problem properties, my own personal definition---does it look bad, smell bad, scare you? But the other is the impact is you emotionally and financially disinvest in the area. That's the reason why we have nuisance codes but doesn't in itself make you meet those definitions in the law.

Lisa Nelson: interim Executive Director of Hamline-Midway Coalition. Thanks to Justin for his background on that. In addition to working there, I live a couple of blocks away from the CVS. I just wanted to say in addition to the definitional nuisance aspects, it has just taken up so much time and energy of the neighborhood organizations. The amount of time we spend talking about it, answering questions about it, helping people file complaints. We have at least monthly neighborhood cleanups, where in addition to the tings reported to Department of Safety & Inspections the neighborhood goes out and does cleanup. Staff time and volunteer time to abate the nuisance ourselves is truly a lot of time. It has been a nuisance in both appearance and time. It would help the neighborhood to have it abated in some way. Even before the exterior appearance got bad, it was still a nuisance to us as a neighborhood. Short of it actually being brought back to occupancy levels and being occupied by a business, I don't see even a maintained empty building not being a nuisance immediately again.

Cora Lewis: I live a couple of blocks from CVS. I have no car so I bike or walk by CVS most days. I support the demolition. I am somewhat skeptical of this process because it is clear the property owner and lessee are purposefully neglectful and purposely harming the neighborhood's development. I don't think they will abate the issue. That is clear. Moreso as a resident is the City will end up basically paying \$100,000 of taxpayer money towards demolishing a building, which I think is fine if the building can become something for the community. That's why I bring up afterwards, because when we were talking about immense corporate neglect—they just ultimately want to profit off the stadium and the neighborhood becoming less and less for its community. As someone who makes minimum wage, who lives here, who is stressed about getting groceries and how to even get food. I am very grateful for alternative food

*distribution like the Zion Community Commons, I think if we are going to spend \$100,000 then I want to emphasize that \$100,000 needs to lead towards a community space that can actually benefit us. Otherwise, I think the whole process is just benefiting corporate money and power growing in our City. *lots of snapping in support**

Moermond: let me just clarify. If the City goes about demolishing the structure, the City Council will issue the order to abate the nuisance building via removal within 15 days. That 15 days is time for the owner to take action to remove it. That means they've hired a contractor, pulled a permit, things are underway. If the City does it, the City will put it out for contract as required. The bid is awarded, hazardous materials assessment, then they can initiate the utility cuts and then demolition. It will require right-of-way access permits, timing issues that need more planning. The City will write the check to demolish. It comes out of City funds, but it also becomes an assessment onto the property. It will stay that way and needs to be paid for by the fee owner. Would the City be out the money? Temporarily, but they'd get it back again from the owner, unless they walk and it goes tax forfeit. If it goes to Ramsey County when they sell we pull that amount of their profit. Ultimately the City would be made whole. I just wanted to explain based on what I heard.

Lewis: I'm more concerned we're making it easier for the likely developer who will buy it. We're making it easier for a developer to come in and not benefit the community.

Lily Eggers: I want to echo the comments of Cora and others. I've lived here 4 years, currently in Rondo/Summit U. I've been particularly active in Hamline-Midway and officed out of Sprucetree for quite a while. I took the time off work to come here today to support the removal. The only good the community gets right now is the 2 feet of shelter on the Snelling side of the building. And that's only because it's something that can be provided without any attention or care by the owner or lessee. I knew this was a likely result in the 2000's when St. Paul allowed an unaccountable conglomerate who closes and opens stores willy-nilly to set up a location at a critical artery of both our City and the Hamline-Midway neighborhood. You get the community you plan for; you get the community you build for. You don't need me to tell you that. We need to think about how we can get this lot to actually address community needs and works within the broader urban fabric. Food access, low income and affordable housing come to mind. This has been the site of such high-income housing development that is also coming from less accountable outside community sources. This opportunity at this location both in terms of its access, transit links and the situation with future delinquent ownership status is also relatively rare in combination. I would support demolition as the current set-up of the building, even if rehabilitated, is not conducive to the community's needs at all. It is one story, set up for a particular kind of commercial operation that I think we've seen in the last 20 years does not ultimately serve the community long-term and it is more costly to refurbish anyway. If it was refurbished I'm of the understanding it would have to be another commercial space?

Moermond: not necessarily. We'd look to the underlying zoning and the allowed use. If they need to change the zoning for the use they want there is an entire process for doing that separate from this.

Eggers: and that's the lot owner's responsibility?

Moermond: yes.

Eggers: I have significant doubts there would be any initiative on that process given the current history of the lot. It is currently set up to serve corporate commercial

interests that are clearly disinterested and actively incentivized to drag their feet as evidenced by the lack of familiarity of the lessee's representative, as we heard, with the situation of the case. The cost is currently being born by the community. There is an active cost right now and it is going into the time and effort the citizens of Hamline-Midway and surrounding neighborhoods are putting into just keeping the building from completely collapsing—both figuratively and literally. There is a public cost, but also an informal cost being born by residents to clean up trash and set up entirely auxiliary support systems for reporting issues at the site. That is all coming out of our time, paychecks, and essentially subsidizing negligence by the owners and lesser extent the lessee of the lot. That is going to continue and that's why I have extreme skepticism about any rehabilitation of the lot. I would personally support demolition but either way the abatement needs to happen and happen now.

Carter Bell: I just moved into an apartment 1.5 blocks south of the building back in May, though I've lived in the area for a better part of 5 years. It is impossible not to notice this building. I agree with the comments about how it is going to be much cheaper and better for the community to demolish and redevelop it later. Frankly, my biggest reason for supporting the demolition is the fact that it is at the crucial spot at the crux of public transit and currently doing a whole lot of nothing for the community for the moment. There is so much that could be done with that site, so many opportunities of what it could be. I know you can't consider the future in your decision, but it could fill the needs of the community through supporting more food options. Though we have alternative food distribution places, they lack adequate space and ideal location. One potential is they could have a site where they could do that dedicated work at the crux of public transit and maximize their ability to help lower income and unhoused members of our community get affordable groceries. Affordable housing is a serious issue both in the Midway and across St. Paul. I would support putting some sort of affordable housing in the spot, maybe above a ground-floor business. There is so much potential for the site that is not what it is currently doing, and to do them you need to demolish what is currently there.

Nicole Brown: I am a sixth-generation Midway resident. I have four 7th generation resident children in the Midway. Ever since the riots/uprising/protesting in 2020 this building has suffered. It surprised me when it went in. The transient culture and history at this crossroads have always been developed by outside hands and large corporate money. The CVS was no surprise with its promises of health but it hasn't served on that promise. My children ride the A line to school and the light rail to events, but because of its negligence and lack of care for 5 years it has drawn this sense of no one paying attention so we can just defecate on it. There are no consequences. It is a perpetual case of if corporate America can get away with this then it brings in the oppression and the oppressed of the neighborhood. Then the outcry of the neighborhood. No big surprise that a lot of the outsider big corporate billionaires come and in neglect the property. This has been all up and down University. This is the busiest and oldest intersection in the neighborhood, midway between St. Anthony falls and the landings of St. Paul. This is on every Minnesota map in history and we'd like to be able to reclaim our space. This has not been done. I would like to see CVS demolished. I'd like to start envisioning this history of people—including my folks, my ancestors who have been here since 1895—all these billionaires, railroads, light rails, trains, businesses have come in and they aren't sustainable. You can plant a tree and it sustains itself. A lot of these buildings, once the billionaires have run their gamut and got their money, they're out. Then we're left to try and make sense of this. CVS is just the biggest eye sore in this. 2.5 million people attend the fair. They see this. they talk about this. This is out of their months. It is big. My children don't want to approach that corner, yet I am supposed to encourage them to take public transit. This is a

culture of transit here and this eyesore just says, "what are we going to do?" I would like to look forward to something. I am going to piggyback on a couple notes that say, "what are we going to do?" I'm not a legislative person, I don't understand a ton of politics, are we going to make it easy for them to place hold and keep neglecting? Are we going to clear it out for the next billionaire to come in and "rescue" our neighborhood. We don't need any more rescuing. Collectively we are ready to start reimagining how residents and small business owners can invest and own our neighborhood and represent this transient diversity culture of our place that isn't billionaire placeholder for the next billionaire. We could demolish CVS and make an example of that that snowballs into a reclaiming of our neighborhood which we have a dire need of. We're doing it one tiny plot at a time. This ugly building standing there surrounded by needles and feces? My children have now taken opioid overdose classes and know how to look for overdosing people and when to call 911 instead of stepping around them at this corner and building. With the demolition it would be safety and aesthetics. I have a whole vision for this but I do not, 1000%, they've had all the time and its time for them to let go. I don't want to see it demolished to make it easier for another corporate outsider who doesn't have any place or investment in our community to come in. I don't want it to be a perfect set up for yet another one.

Arlie Lee: I live 2 miles from this intersection for a year now. When I moved to St. Paul the CVS was boarded and abandoned along with a significant number of other buildings across the University corridor. I know you can't consider plans for what will happen after the building is abated, but as you can see from the turnout here, we really care about our community. The empty and abandoned buildings forebode the further gentrification of our community and we simply deserve better. The way people talk about the dilapidated state of the building mirrors their sentiments of our unhoused and dispossessed neighbors in the area. These folks are seen as nuisances as well; however, you cannot rule to demolish their lives—not explicitly—I'm not here to harp on it but it is a fact that there is a fundamental lack of support systems. Especially at such an important transit hub we need community centers, food distribution systems, affordable housing, child care, free clinics. We have more than enough space for those in our neighborhood. We don't need to worry about feces in the street if there were actually places for people to use the bathroom. I just wanted to state that point.

Gunnar Aas: I live a couple of blocks away from this intersection. I really don't think this property or ownership especially is capable of filling any need of the community. The big reason I came today was I was really hoping that *somebody* from CVS or this LLC would show and try and defend their ownership so we could put a face to this building. The fact that no one showed up and all they sent was a lawyer who didn't seem to know much about the property shows how little they care. If you came and told me you were going to tear my house or business down, I would be here kicking and screaming to save it. Where is that interest from CVS? It isn't just a failure of responsibility, it isn't just negligence, it is an insult to this community, to the City, and it shows me they haven't just neglected the building, they've abandoned it. I would love to see the City approach it from that perspective. They keep telling us they will continue to try, but I walk past that intersection almost every day. I've not seen any effort over the last couple of years. They were forced to put up the fence that only made the problems worse. There is trash everywhere. I clean up trash around there multiple days a week. I've probably filled thousands of trash bags in the area. I'm never going to get that time back and I feel like CVS needs to pay for that. People talked about how this is driving investment interest away. I hear that every time I talk with people. They say I could never see myself living here, and they are mainly talking about the CVS they see when they're driving to my neighborhood. It makes me feel sad and disappointed about the place that I live and the whole reason I am involved

with groups like the Hamline-Midway Coalition is to try and change our neighborhood for the better. I am glad to see the City is finally doing something about this problem property. I'd love to see something happen with this; at the end of the day, we deserve better. One question about demolition, I think about other properties that have been demolished that are now just fenced in grass that doesn't get cut, filled with trash. What will this look like in the aftermath of demolition? Will it be the same empty lot no one takes care of? Can it be a green space for our community in the interim? What can I expect a year from now?

Moermond: I don't have foresight to see that. I can say a property's ability to become productive again is directly tied to the property values and ownership. The City will not own this property. That isn't what this is about. Someone who owns the property will continue to be on the deed unless they lost it for nonpayment of taxes or they sell it. I can't change that, and I can't say what the future will look like there. What I can say is management of those types of lots, Mr. Hoffman, you see a lot.

Hoffman: when it is done it will be a hydroseeded dirt lot. From there, if the owner doesn't do anything with it, we monitor it as a vacant lot. Cut the grass if they don't.

Moermond: one thing that surprised me, particularly with residential properties, is sometimes owner's thinking gets muddled about the cost of holding the property versus its productive value. I don't know inaction right now falls in that category but it is a matter of a financial analysis they have to do. Often it isn't sitting on a property and paying high property taxes. The marginal increase in benefit is eaten up by holding costs. There needs to be that analysis, I don't know if that's happened. I don't see them in the room. That is what I look at and would also say that plays directly into their willingness and energy towards rehabilitation.

Aas: would the demolition of the property down to the dirt include the parking lot?

Hoffman: correct, yes. The entire parcel, excluding any alley easements typically.

Mike Morrow o/b/o Union Park District Council: as our letter stated, we support the City's action of removal or repair. I just want to echo the concern about the owner not showing up. If you sent me a letter telling me to mow the lawn, I'd at least contact Department of Safety & Inspections letting them know I was taking care of it. That letter wasn't enough. We wanted someone physically here because this isn't a small matter. It is important. I was hoping we would hear something from the owner so we knew where they stood. I am disturbed, concerned, bothered, by that. The lack of attendance IS a position by the owner.

Jacob Hooper: I live just outside the Midway in southwest Como. I'm grateful for Councilmember Coleman for introducing this. Justin Lewandowski really put it very well, but does it look bad, smell bad, scare you? Yes, yes, yes. Is it negatively impacting the economy of the neighborhood? Clearly, yes. People are not interested in renting spaces at the Sprucetree. I took a selfie at that intersection and posted it on social media a while ago and a bunch of people responded like "oh my gosh that's the worst intersection in St. Paul." There's a beautiful used bookstore, a statue of a loon, when people say it is the worst intersection in St. Paul they're talking about CVS. It is definitely impacting people's willingness to invest in the neighborhood. CVS doesn't care about us, doesn't care about Snelling and University, doesn't care about the Midway, doesn't care about St. Paul. We are a rounding error on a spreadsheet to them. Maybe this is just what happens when we court national corporations rather than cultivating local businesses. Either way they have no plan or intention to improve the

*obviously unsafe blighted botched painting of the property. They won't improve the nuisance condition, they've proved that over the last several years. They've also approved it in their unbelievably disinterested testimony here today. The owners didn't even show up. This thing is occupying one of the most important intersections in the City. It should be one of the most exciting places to be in the City, instead it is dragging down the whole neighborhood. It is dragging down the rest of St. Paul. The City should prove it cares about blight and I think we should get rid of it. We should replace it with literally anything. I would love to see housing. To be clear I think a patch of dirt would be better than the current CVS. *lots of snapping in background* I think you should either demolish it or let us, the community, after it and we will tear it down ourselves with sledgehammers and our bare hands like it is the Berlin wall.*

Moermond: don't do that.

Ron Barze: I work with the Neighborhood Development Center in Frogtown. I don't have a lot to add other than we've been in the community for 30 years working in economic development, working with entrepreneurs and small businesses and we are here to help.

Moermond: this goes to the City Council on November 5. We like to give an opportunity to make available for plans that have been developed for a building's rehabilitation to be reviewed prior to the Council hearing. That is our standard practice, so if there were an owner sitting here and they had ideas we'd want to see them nailed down in short order. We'd have to review and approve them. In the normal course the things I would look for would be a \$5,000 Performance Deposit, a team inspection with the trades' inspectors going through. We need to see bids for the relevant trades as well as scope of work/work plan/sworn construction statement. We need to see the money to pay all of those bills. What this one presents to me two things: 1) it has become evident in reviewing the file that the placement of a fence around the property has not amounted to a nuisance abatement plan for managing the site, whether it is removed or repaired, there needs to be something during these several months to happen. At other locations we've asked for not only securing the site but also cleaning, lighting, cameras, involving the St. Paul Police Department. Again, that would be part of the owner showing up in good faith to be able to address the situation at hand. I would like to point out that I'm not 100 percent clear on the exact relationship between CVS as lessee and the LLC owner in Spokane Washington. In terms of accountability for who should be developing plans, getting bids, ordering inspections, that isn't clear. If the owner isn't the one presenting the plans and taking responsibility, I'd need to see a contract with the owner actively authorizing someone to do the work, that they're involved. I don't want to assume anything. This is how we've treated other similarly situated properties. I don't have any of these things right now. I don't have an owner present.

Mai Vang: we haven't had an owner contact us, just a Jonathan Shumrak from CVS.

Moermond: so, we've heard from CVS but not the LLC. They would have got the order to abate a nuisance building on August 5, notice of hearings on August 25, most times we hear from them. The order to abate a nuisance building itself was sent August 8 does articulate clearly the necessity for the inspection report and Performance Deposit. That is not a new ask today for the first time. That's been out there for nearly 2 months with no action. I'm frankly also surprised this hasn't come forward before, but I would say if there had been work with Mr. Hoban and Ms. Newman, which I wouldn't be party to any of that, I can see where maybe there would have been a delay if there was a sense of movement in those conversations. I don't

know. I don't see movement right now and lacking that I would recommend the City Council order the building removed with no option for its rehabilitation in 15 days. I want you all to know the public record is still open. We could get a pile of paperwork from anyone on this and I'd need to review that and it would have an impact on where I am coming from with my recommendation. Public hearing is actually when the record is closed, not today. If you have additional comments, send them in. We're happy to look at them. I'm going to put a placeholder on my calendar for October 28. What that means is if I do get additional proposals for abating the nuisance condition that would be a time to review those so I have a fresh report for the City Council. If I don't have anything there won't be a lot to talk about and we can affirm where we are today. I do want to make that clear to you all and ownership that the record is open. The least I can do is take a minute and review that. Whatever we are sent would show up in the public record and is accessible online.

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 10/28/2025

- 2 RLH RR 25-28** Ordering the rehabilitation or razing and removal of the structures at 430 DALE STREET NORTH within fifteen (15) days after the October 22, 2025, City Council Public Hearing.

Sponsors: Bowie

Refer back to LH October 28, 2025 for further discussion and decisions of rehab or removal of property. (CPH Nov 5).

*Anita Alexander, member of United Memorial Methodist Church, appeared
Muhammed Ambo, o/b/o Oromo American Tawhid Islamic Center of St. Paul,
appeared via phone*

Moermond: we were originally scheduled a couple of weeks ago. [Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor James Hoffman: The building is a one story, wood frame, commercial building on a lot of 22,869 square feet. The Fire C of O was revoked and condemned on May 17, 2023 due to a fire. The property was referred to Vacant Buildings with files opened on May 22, 2023. The current property owner is Oromo American Tawhid Islamic Com St Paul, per AMANDA and Ramsey County Property records.

On May 21, 2025, an inspection of the building was conducted, a list of deficiencies which constitute a nuisance condition was developed and photographs were taken. An Order to Abate a Nuisance Building was posted on June 25, 2025, with a compliance date of July 25, 2025. As of this date, the property remains in a condition which comprises a nuisance as defined by the legislative code.

Taxation has placed an estimated market value of \$571,000 on the land and \$102,300 on the building. Real estate taxes for 2024 are delinquent in the amount of \$1,640.83, which includes penalty and interest. The property is scheduled for tax forfeiture on July 31, 2028. The vacant building registration fees were paid by assessment on June 2, 2025. As of September 15, 2025, a Team Inspection has not been done. As of September 15, 2025, the \$5,000 performance deposit has not been posted. There have been thirty-one Summary Abatement Notices since 2023. There have been eighteen work orders issued for: Garbage/rubbish, boarding/securing, tall grass/weeds, snow/ice and graffiti. Code Enforcement Officers estimate the cost to repair this structure exceeds \$250,000. The estimated cost to demolish exceeds

\$80,000.

Ambo: this building was insured but they refused to pay to repair. We took them to court and it is scheduled for December of this year. Our plan is to repair but we don't have money and are waiting for it to be completed.

Moermond: the fire happened more than 2 years ago. No action and poor maintenance of the property. I get you want to repair but I don't see investment in terms of simple maintenance even.

Ambo: we are doing everything. We remove refuse and snow. We boarded the windows and fenced the entire building. We are doing everything we can. I've been speaking with someone—I'm doing everything.

Moermond: I just heard from Mr. Hoffman that since May of 2023 the City has had to send 31 notices and 18 work orders resulting in assessment. That is quite a bit. I understand you've taken some action but certainly not as much as needed to be done if the City has had to do that much to manage your property. That's a concern to me. I see perhaps as an organization disinvested in what is happening on site. That's what that history says to me. Tell me more about the insurance situation.

Ambo: they delayed and took more than six months to respond. They denied end of 2021 or 2022. We hired an attorney and they scheduled the hearing for this year. They offered us some money, now we are waiting for trial end of this year.

Moermond: alright. We'll come back and talk a bit more about what the future may look like for you. In the meantime, let's hear from Ms. Alexander on her take on the situation.

Alexander: I am a 35-year member of Camphor United Methodist Church, located at 585 Fuller. Since the main structure fire in 2022 this has moved to a nuisance property. 3 additional fires in the building. We got a fence installed around the parking lot on the east side of the building which has cut down on the loitering and dumping into the lot and around the building. We are responsible for many complaints to Department of Safety & Inspections for trash, excessive weeds, trees, abandoned vehicles, and graffiti removal as late as last week. The City has always taken care of the issues we raised. Special assessments have been put on their taxes; however, nothing has changed. Our members work hard to maintain our church inside and out. We make sure all trash is picked up from our building to Dale Street, and from Fuller Avenue to Unidale Mall. We file formal complaints as needed and work with the unhoused as we are able. We have a good relationship with the St. Paul Police Department as they help us continuously as we handle the effects of this property. The condition of this property negatively impacts our church, the HeadStart daycare on Fuller along with all other properties within view. Hundreds of cars travel along Dale street and see the deplorable as viewed in the photos taken. We don't want our area to be viewed like this. Our church is interested in the land and possibly the building, however we are a church and any type of acquisition would be a lengthy process. We are ready for a change because we keep working to keep the area looking decent, but we are tired.

Ambo: she said abandoned cars and garbage. The lot is completely fenced, so how are we responsible for abandoned cars on the street?

Alexander: we haven't had one in the lot in the last year, but though your lot is fenced it

is still accessible by the unhoused. We try to move things back outside the fence since it isn't totally secure. The police helped us last week, along with a couple people using it for a bathroom.

Moermond: so, people are defecating and urinating on the exterior?

Alexander: yes.

Hoffman: certainly broken into multiple times. Boarded multiple times by RestPro. A lot of trash around the building, especially the front and along the northeast corner where a lot of people hang out. We did send a Summary Abatement Order a week and a half ago to clear out the trees and brush which our crew did last week to deter people from hanging out there.

Moermond: I'm concerned about the vagueness of redevelopment at this property. I know dealing with insurance is never fun or fast, but I don't know---what steps have you taken to move forward with or without insurance? By not paying taxes in 2024 it is a signal to me you may be stepping away?

Ambo: no. We don't have money and they told us to not repair because they may refuse.

Moermond: before you can even begin that, the question of the taxes is not insignificant. You didn't pay the second half of 2023. None in 2024 and none so far in 2025. There's a total of levied, pending and assessed assessments of \$24,433. Ten already levied so far just this year for over \$9,000. That's not a small amount, plus the cost of the rehabilitation. We have some significant issues. The money racking up does say to me you are walking whether you are verbally saying it or not. You keep insisting you maintain the property and pay taxes, which is demonstrably not true. I understand you have insurance, but it may be a discussion about value lost because you couldn't get it done in time. Clearly the tax situation needs to be taken care of. Why? Because I need to know you aren't going to come to a halt in the middle because you can't pay contractors. I need to see a \$5,000 Performance Deposit. You haven't ordered a Code Compliance Inspection Report. No property maintenance. No bids. No money. I need all of that to show you are in this and willing to address the situation. The City and the neighborhood can't wait for an indefinite date for insurance who may or may not pay out. Maybe talk to your leadership team at your organization.

I need to check in with you on one thing. I understand you didn't get a mailing. When I check the tax records I see two mailing addresses. 430 Dale and one for you at 1001 Westgate here in town. I see that Westgate property is owned by the Community based on its initials. If there's another address we should be using, please let us know what that is. We're happy to use an email moving forward and include anyone else you'd like. I am really feeling good about the prospects of rehab, but it could be this is the call for you to take action and get it done. I want the problem to be taken care of, one of the two roads: knocking down the building, the other is fixing it up and making the building productive again. One of those things has to happen or the City will move forward with the demolition.

This has a Council Public Hearing October 22. I had to delay this hearing so I will push that to November 5. I'm currently inclined to order it removed within 15 days with no option to repair. I'm willing to revisit this if you. Some of these steps were told to you months ago. Maintaining the property? Driving by you can see these things. Checking your mail is certainly important but actively managing the property is more important.

That hasn't happened. That tells me you are disinvested. I'd love to see that turn around and I'm happy to continue talking if you can make this work.

Referred to the City Council due back on 10/22/2025

Making Finding on Nuisance Abatements

- 3 RLH RR 25-17** First Making finding on the appealed substantial abatement ordered for 887 CHARLES AVENUE in Council File RLH RR 24-17. (Nuisance is abated)

Sponsors: Bowie

The nuisance is abated and the matter resolved (as of 10/1/25).

Kyle Runbeck, owner, appeared

Runbeck: because of things being down the plumbing and electrical inspectors had to come down and see again and then I had to submit photos. I did get my building permit in August.

Moermond: the reason this is taking so long is because of the cyberattack. They're finally doing new permits. This requires a conversation with Clint Zane.

Runbeck: I spoke with him this morning.

Moermond: I'm going to send this to Council October 22nd. We don't need to talk again. It is just that final permitting piece. Let's go ahead and we'll check in before then. Send us an email if something comes up. Hopefully in the next month you've got the final on the building permit and it is done. Right now, you get the entire \$5,000 Performance Deposit if you are done by the end of the month.

[Note: CCC issued 10/1 by Inspector Zane]

Referred to the City Council due back on 10/22/2025

- 4 RLH RR 25-27** Third Making finding on the appealed substantial abatement ordered for 195 GOODRICH AVENUE in Council File RLH RR 25-15.

Sponsors: Noecker

Recommendation forthcoming pending finalized permits and issuance of CC certificate.

David Marks, purchaser, appeared

Moermond: let's do the same thing, send this to October 22, and hope things are wrapped up by then.

Referred to the City Council due back on 10/22/2025

- 5 RLH RR 25-26** Third Making finding on the appealed substantial abatement ordered for 1213 WOODBRIDGE STREET in Council File RLH RR 25-23.

Sponsors: Kim

The nuisance is abated and the matter resolved (as of 10/1/25).

[Note: CCC issued 10/1 by Inspector Zane]

Referred to the City Council due back on 10/22/2025

10:00 a.m. Hearings

Special Tax Assessments - ROLLS

- 6 **RLH AR 25-92** Ratifying the assessment for Rubbish and Garbage Clean Up services during June 11 to July 11, 2025. (File No. J2601R, Assessment No. 268601)

Sponsors: Noecker

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/7/2026

- 7 **RLH AR 25-93** Ratifying the assessment for Tall Grass and Weed Removal services during June 12 to 24, 2025. (File No. J2601TW, Assessment No. 268701)

Sponsors: Noecker

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/7/2026

11:00 a.m. Hearings

Summary & Vehicle Abatement Orders

- 8 [RLH SAO 25-53](#) Appeal of Paul Warner to a Summary and Vehicle Abatement Orders at 42 BAKER STREET WEST. (September 30, 2025 Legislative Hearing)

Sponsors: Noecker

Grant to October 3, 2025 for compliance.

Tried calling 11:37 am: Voicemail box full.

Moermond: let's go ahead and amend the resolution to have a deadline of October 3 and we can kick out an email indicating that is the recommendation.

Referred to the City Council due back on 10/1/2025

- 9 [RLH SAO 25-55](#) Appeal of Mark Puchala II to a Summary Abatement Order and Vehicle Abatement Order at 2016 FREMONT AVENUE.

Sponsors: Johnson

Grant to October 13, 2025 for compliance with TG&W order. Grant to November 3, 2025 for compliance with the VAO.

Mark Puchala, owner, appeared via phone

Moermond: I know we've talked before but I'll restate. [Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: September 11, 2025 a Summary Abatement Order was issued to cut the tall grass and weeds from property including boulevard. Also, a Vehicle Abatement Order for camper in back yard, no tabs. Deadline of September 18th for both. Nothing is changed; it is now September 30th.

Puchala: I have my partner with me, the camper is theirs. We had the inspector come a long time ago about the camper, and he said as long as we park it and put brakes below and around the tires we don't need registration and can sit as it was. It is now a stationary building essentially. The only weeds are my sow thistle, horseweed and an ash tree and maple tree. If I fence it off does that change anything?

Moermond: fence around the weeds?

Puchala: they are my plants, but sure.

Moermond: what am I missing with the plants?

Puchala: I'm trying to get out weeds. I am finishing up the lawn to legumes program. I went and got a sign from them. I've been trying to let the plants grow to identify them. I'm removing the yellow foxtail. There is one form of grass I can see where it is above the 8", I just haven't been able to identify yet, that is next to my food garden. I have horse weed and milk weed on the boulevard but I'm removing the rag weed. I'm trying to preserve the biodiversity for pollinators. Those are the things I'm getting flagged for. Anthony Munos came in person a month or 2 ago and was pointing out my sedge which is a native plant that is supposed to be exempt but he said even though it is 3" high the fact it is more than 8" long it has to be mowed. It is covered by the U of M extension as a native grass that should be kept.

Moermond: back to the parking, Ms. Martin, I haven't heard it is ok to put bricks in. it seems that it should be approved by zoning.

Martin: no site plan given for approval, you need asphalt or concrete. I've never seen one approved in this type of situation.

Puchala: we simply did what the inspector told us to do. It sounds like we need to install a lot of asphalt or concrete and that would pass?

Moermond: what you need to do is talk to Zoning about what you'd like to do for parking in that area. The current situation isn't code compliant.

Puchala: I'd like to ask for patience with that, because we just did what we were told.

Martin: the other thing is it is deployed. It is being used.

Puchala: it has to be closed to be stored?

Martin: it says in his own appeal application it is being used as a structure. We don't allow it up and open. Our concern is people living in it. If you are looking for a shed, then it has to be a shed, not a camper used for storage. It has to have current tabs and be on an approved surface.

Puchala: we use it as a patio essentially to go in and watch the birds without scaring them. That isn't allowed unless we do what is approved by Zoning?

*Moermond: it is a vehicle. You are using it as an extension of your built living area, which is fine. AS such, you'd need a building permit if it is used as a structure. IF it is a used in a dual capacity it needs to be taken care of as a vehicle, and that would require tabs and parking on an appropriate surface. There are a couple solutions, but what is going on now isn't compliant. There are considerations zoning will look at such as if there is a parking spot with a driveway leading to it. Is it far enough from the property line? Those types of things. I would rely on their opinion and judgment about whether or not your proposal is acceptable. I don't do zoning so I can't provide that. Let's talk more about your managed landscape. I'm looking at MN Statute 412.925 and I'm not really reading it to encompass the grasses as you're talking about them. It does really talk about a managed natural landscape that is planned, intentional, and maintained. They do say managed natural landscapes do not include turf-grass lawns left unattended for the purpose of returning to a natural state. My assessment from the photos is that is indeed what is happening. It does limit height of turf lawn grasses to be no more than 8". I'm looking for *managed*, not whatever grows up. I don't see that now.*

Puchala: that's what I have trouble understanding because the only grass I found taller than 8" is the yellow foxtail which I have been removing. The rest is only 4-5" and stays that way. It can't grow higher.

Moermond: the photos I'm seeing taken yesterday look much higher than that.

Puchala: could you point me to the section you are looking at? I'm in the yard right now.

Moermond: the stop sign area. The area in the corner where two sidewalks connect.

Puchala: at the crosswalk that's my crown vetch and my goldenrod and milkweed. There is no grass there.

Moermond: I don't see it is managed at all and I am not in agreement. I know we talked about this exact same thing last year and had a conversation about what a plan for the future would be. I don't know if you've considered that further or just let it go, or your intention at this point?

Puchala: my intention is exactly that. I'm in the yard right now trying to go slow and confirm each part. I know with the front path from the door to the road on the stairway we do have a bunch of grass with the yellow tails at the top. That's the foxtail I've been removing. The grass that's shorter behind the garden at the front with the wooden walls is all below 8". Does that all count as too high?

Moermond: I feel like you're splitting hairs on this. Is the crew going to look at which plant is higher or lower? No. If the area has grasses taller than 8" they will mow it. Honestly, we've had this conversation last year at this same time and you said you'd be meeting with a master gardener to put together a plan, has that happened?

Puchala: yes, it did. That's part of why I'm removing the fox tails. I apologize, I don't mean to seem like I'm splitting hairs I'm actually meaning to say I'm trying to whittle down what I can confirm I am removing and what I'm not removing fast enough.

Moermond: I don't see this being managed native planting. It doesn't look managed, it overgrows the sidewalk, no distinguishing features besides overgrown lawn. I see cut plants drying in piles. Piles of sticks. These are signals to me it isn't maintained. I don't see distinguishing between the grasses. It looks to me like a lawn that went un-mowed, you may be pulling things you deem noxious, but I don't know you are managing it. Council may look at it differently. As such, I don't think it meets the spirit of the law or the code, but you can certainly make that case to Council on October 8th. I'm going to recommend that they give you October 13th to deal with the tall grass and weeds. As far as the camper, sounds like you want to talk to Zoning about what may work to store it. It does have to have tabs and they will talk to you about ways for it to be accessible to a driveway, and be on an appropriate surface. That needs to be addressed by November 3rd, that will be my recommendation.

Referred to the City Council due back on 10/8/2025

Correction Orders

- 10 [RLH CO 25-8](#) Appeal of Nachman Goldberg to a Correction Order at 1809 YORKSHIRE AVENUE.

Sponsors: Jost

Layover to LH October 21, 2025 at 11 am (rescheduled).

Moermond: layover to October 14 in Legislative Hearing.

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 10/21/2025

1:00 p.m. Hearings

Fire Certificates of Occupancy

- 11 [RLH FCO 25-61](#) Appeal of Abdalla Tobasi to a Fire Fire Inspection Report at 933 MINNEHAHA AVENUE WEST.

Sponsors: Bowie

Layover to LH October 14, 2025 at 1 pm for further discussion.

Abdalla Tobasi, owner, appeared via phone

Moermond: I am calling about your two appeals at 933 Minnehaha and 809 Selby Avenue. [Moermond gives background of appeals process]

Staff report by Supervisor Mitch Imbertson: at 933 Minnehaha we have a correction order related to a Fire Certificate of Occupancy inspection for a commercial gas station. One of the codes cited is the one being appealed, the requirement to provide outside telephone or communication for unattended fuel dispensing. This is for when the gas station is not staffed or open inside. This gives people pumping gas a means to contact front desk or emergency services such as fire or fuel spill that sort of thing. "A telephone not requiring a coin to operate or other approved means of notifying the fire department shall be provided on the site in an approved location. The telephone must be available at all times that dispensing can occur." Historically that's been met

by a pay phone on the site. This is a somewhat frequent issue we come across due to many payphones no longer existing. The Selby address is a very similar issue with the addition that there is another order for a piece of missing signage from a similar code requirement.

Tobasi: I've owned one of those gas stations for 34 years, the other 24 years. I've been through lots of inspections before and the gentleman who came in to inspect because of my experience I am up to date and I get everything done. Maybe a couple small things to fix which I do right away. This time around he gave me a few things to get done and I have no issues except when it came to the phone outside. I said I will do my best to provide something and spent about a month talking to the Minnesota Service Station & Convenience Store Association. They said they've never heard of this requirement. I talked to my alarm company. They don't do that. I spent a lot of months trying to figure out how to get a phone outside and I wasn't successful. Then I called the inspector and said I couldn't find anyone to provide this service. I have no issues doing things required, but I couldn't find any company that provides this service. That's why I'm appealing. I am happy to do so in the future if I can find someone who will do it, but that's why I'm appealing to get permission to pass for now until I figure something out. I checked a lot of gas stations in the area and no one has it. Someone told me an alarm company and I contacted them and they said they don't do that.

Moermond: has this been called out in the past Mr. Imbertson? It seems pretty straightforward.

Imbertson: one thing that is unfortunate is being unable to get feedback on similar situations from the Association. It is a common suggestion we make to check with a trade or business association to see what similar businesses are doing to comply. Things we may not even be aware of. This isn't specific to St. Paul, this is MN State fire Code, which is pulled from the international fire code. Most states should have same or similar requirements. It isn't a unique requirement to St. Paul. As far as other stations, many may not be open for dispensing after hours or may not have been at the time of previous inspections. This is specific only to unattended fuel dispensing. We do hear from many stations that it isn't advantageous to keep them open after hours due to these requirements or the fire extinguisher requirements.

Tobasi: I know 99% of the stores do have after hours dispensing. When we did it back in 2015 or 2016 they told us to have a sign with an emergency shut-off button, which there is, and a fire extinguisher which I also have at both stores. That was all the requirement to my knowledge. The MN association is throughout information and they weren't able to provide me with any way to provide a company that will do it. I am willing to do it but I don't have any way of finding who does it.

Moermond: tell me about the emergency button.

Tobasi: it says in case of emergency press this button. It shuts off all the fuel equipment on site. Dismantles the entire operation.

Moermond: so not adding fuel TO a fire, but it may already be burning. Is that the concern Mr. Imbertson?

Imbertson: that's a separate requirement actually. I'm happy to hear that all exists, but it isn't equivalencies or trade offs for the communication requirements.

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 10/14/2025

12 [RLH FCO 25-60](#) Appeal of Abdalla Tobasi to a Fire Fire Inspection Report at 809 SELBY AVENUE (806 SELBY AVENUE).

Sponsors: Bowie

Layover to LH October 14, 2025 at 1 pm for further discussion.

Abdalla Tobasi, owner, appeared via phone

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Moermond: so not adding fuel TO a fire, but it may already be burning. Is that the concern Mr. Imbertson?

Imbertson: that's a separate requirement actually. I'm happy to hear that all exists, but it isn't equivalencies or trade offs for the communication requirements.

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 10/14/2025

1:30 p.m. Hearings

Orders To Vacate - Code Enforcement

- 13** [RLH VO 25-19](#) Appeal of Isaac Garland and Franchesca Vann-Wickstrom to a Notice of Condemnation as Unfit for Human Habitation and Order to Vacate at 705 DAYTON AVENUE. (October 7, 2025 Legislative Hearing)

Sponsors: Bowie

Layover to LH October 7, 2025 at 11 am (rescheduled due to scheduling error).

Moermond: we have no staff to handle at 11:00 so we'll continue it one week.

Referred to the City Council due back on 10/8/2025