

# **City of Saint Paul**

15 West Kellogg Blvd. Saint Paul, MN 55102

## **Minutes - Final**

## **Legislative Hearings**

Marcia Moermond, Legislative Hearing Officer Mai Vang, Hearing Coordinator Joanna Zimny, Executive Assistant legislativehearings@ci.stpaul.mn.us 651-266-8585

Tuesday, October 28, 2025

9:00 AM

Room 330 City Hall & Court House/Remote

9:00 a.m. Hearings

#### Remove/Repair Orders

1 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. (Refer to October 28, 2025 Legislative Hearing)

**Sponsors:** Bowie

Layover to LH Monday, November 10, 2025 at 9 am for further discussion (CPH Nov 19).

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 11/10/2025

2 RLH RR 25-30

Ordering the 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

Remove within 15 days, no option to repair.

Isaac Alie, interested party o/b/o The Keghouse 1607 Team, appeared Daniel Eshetu, interested party o/b/o The Keghouse 1607 Team, appeared

Moermond: where we left things last time was having this today for the purpose of reviewing any plans that were forthcoming, seeing if a Performance Deposit was posted, a Code Compliance Inspection applied for, property being maintained? All of those things to consider.

Supervisor James Hoffman: I haven't seen a Code Compliance Inspection or Performance Deposit posted. Not much change on the outside, but some new graffiti I've sent a work order for.

Moermond: we took a lot of testimony last time. We're adding your perspective on top of that record.

Alie: this is the first time for us and for me. We're Keghouse about trying to establish communication between a couple of you guys. We started as a little event place when we went to Hamline University with people of the community. Creating a space to gather. After we graduated we have tried doing different things in our life. We live in the neighborhood on Van Buren Avenue. We know the neighborhood like the back of our hand. We know everyone. We need this space more than ever. We don't see just tearing the building down as fixing the issue. Dispersing the unhoused. It just separates the people.

We've been looking at the building for a while but we never really knew how to go about it. We're new and trying to establish ourselves. Then we saw the newsletter about making decisions whether to demolish it. We couldn't figure out why the owners weren't doing anything with it. We thought it was time to establish ourselves and try and get this building. Since September 25 until now we've been researching day and night, trying to figure out who owns it. It was an LLC with and did some more digging. Finally connected with CVS who owns the building. They don't want to use the building and still have the lease with the ownership group. They want to sell the lease and the building and ownership which is like Tressler Mall something, LLC group. They still have the lease until January 2030 but they want out and sell the lease and building and the ownership group is ok with that idea.

Moermond: who do you think the owner is?

Alie: Tressler—I can get you the name.

Moermond: no, it just isn't who we have.

Alie: yep we found out from Seth, a representative of CVS, that's a shell company. We kept trying to figure out who owns it and they don't make it easy to do. The LLC is owned by another LLC and another LLC and finally we found out the holding group that owns all these LLCs. We're talking to them to try and put in a bid. We're meeting with them tomorrow. Based on what they told us, at least this Seth guy, 3 other people have put in bids for the building. We are also trying to not rush into things. We're very young. I went to Hamline for exercise science, working out. We believe in the idea we want to do. Daniel will touch more on that. It could be very helpful for the City. We believe we don't need a rich entity to fix us, we believe the people who live there can help one another and fix ourselves. We really need that. Seeing the McDonald's that used to be there. That's where we used to go, now the loon bird is standing there. Seeing the community torn to shreds. We're here to ask for a shot and a chance. We've done our research and know a lot of people want to tear it down but we are asking for a shot from our family, our people, you guys. Daniel can speak more on what we can do for the community.

Eshetu: the neighborhood is being torn to shreds in an initiative to push people out. This building is mission critical to our vision to get the foot traffic from Allianz field to boost revenue and support community in ways we haven't seen before. A big vision of ours is DJ school. We have a lot of connections with DJs from our previous venture. Isaac made connections at a bar he worked at and knows almost every DJ in Minnesota. With those connections we're able to teach the youth how to do this. We've seen how vital for a venue it is for DJs to come boost the atmosphere. It would be unique and something we don't see everywhere to help encourage the youth to see a vision for their future. That's the DJ school aspect and that's our vision and tying the community in with what we want to do.

We're at the financing piece which is why we haven't put together a letter of how we will rehabilitate. We started about a month ago on sorting the paperwork. Last Tuesday we had a meeting last week with a brokerage company in Minneapolis who told us everything we had to do to put a bid on the building. Before we did that we had to get our proof of income together. We've been curating connections the last four or five years. Isaac and I we always had the vision of doing something big and people to support those ideas. We've been meeting people with businesses and nurturing those connections and now we are at the point we need to use those connections to do what we want to. They wanted the letters of financial proof in on Friday. We wanted to safely talk to our investors, not just jump in. We want to make sure it works flawlessly, so we weren't able to do that by the meeting. We weren't able to post the \$5,000 Performance Deposit.

Moermond: and they may not accept it as you don't have ownership position in the building. They would look for that first.

Eshetu: given that, we were hoping you'd be able to not put a ruling on this case right away to give us an opportunity to talk to our investors, get ownership in our name. We are actively working on that with our investor. Then we'd know after we placed our offer whether we were in contention for this property or not.

Moermond: the biggest deal right now is you don't have control of the property. No ownership position. Because of that you aren't able to put together a plan, get inspections, do anything meaningful. I understand you have to show proof of income to get interest in the building. I've heard nothing from any owner. Without that, I can't, in good faith, recommend to the Council they give time for these plans to mature.

I can say that the way you are talking about what you want to do with the business is really inspiring and the kind of activity the City likes to see. I can recommend that you talk with our Planning and Economic Development department and see if there's seed money to refer you too. I can see you are serious, a vision, have partners. In this case I don't see the property freeing itself up for you to work on. Maybe in the future, post demolition, you could buy the parcel as you get your money together. I don't have a way to tell them to wait for plans to mature. I'm going to continue my recommendation to Council. As I indicated in the previous hearing, it would be for the demolition of this building. If you want to present your idea to the Council they may or may not be persuaded. That would be your next stop.

Referred to the City Council due back on 11/5/2025

#### 3 RLH RR 25-32

Ordering the rehabilitation or razing and removal of the structures at 693 COOK AVENUE EAST within fifteen (15) days after the December 3, 2025, City Council Public Hearing.

**Sponsors:** Yang

Remove within 15 days with no option to repair.

Referred to the City Council due back on 12/3/2025

11:00 a.m. Hearings

**Correction Orders** 

#### 4 RLH CO 25-13

Appeal of Robert Lankfard to a Correction Order at 613 VIRGINIA STREET.

Sponsors: Bowie

Grant to November 24, 2025 for compliance (refreshing class 5 with clean boundaries).

Referred to the City Council due back on 11/12/2025

#### **Summary & Vehicle Abatement Orders**

## 5 RLH SAO 25-62

Appeal of Deborah Ruberto to a Summary Abatement Order and Vehicle Abatement Order at 235 BATES AVENUE.

**Sponsors:** Johnson

Grant to January 1, 2026 for compliance with items related to weight lifting and punching bag(s), and grant to November 24, 2025 for balance of the orders; also grant to November 24, 2025 for compliance with the Vehicle Abatement Order.

Referred to the City Council due back on 11/12/2025

## 6 RLH SAO 25-61

Appeal of Johnny E Howard Sr to a Summary Abatement Order at 633 VAN BUREN AVENUE.

**Sponsors:** Bowie

Grant to December 12, 2025 for compliance.

Referred to the City Council due back on 11/12/2025

#### **Orders to Vacate Code Enforcement**

#### **7** RLH VO 25-21

Appeal of Dennis D. Grahs to a Notice of Condemnation As Unfit for Human Habitation & Order to Vacate at 555 SMITH AVENUE SOUTH.

Sponsors: Noecker

Layover to LH November 18, 2025 at 11 am to discuss work plan and deadlines for compliance. PO to submit workplan by no later than November 14, 2025. Reinspection November 12, 2025 at 10 am.

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 11/18/2025