



# City of Saint Paul

15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

## Minutes - Final

### Legislative Hearings

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Tuesday, October 28, 2025

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 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).*

*Amano Dube, board chair o/b/o Tawhid Islamic Center, appeared  
Dr. Abdurahim Doyo, o/b/o Tawhid Islamic Center, appeared  
Osman Hussein, o/b/o Tawhid Islamic Center, appeared  
Omar Robe, o/b/o Tawhid Islamic Center, appeared  
Anita Alexander, o/b/o Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church, appeared  
Daniel Eshetu, neighbor, appeared*

*Moermond: we received communication yesterday from Mark Dooley, an attorney.*

*Dube: that is our attorney pursuing the case for the insurance because of vandalism and fire. He was planning to come with us because the case was dropped by the insurance company and we are waiting for trial planned in December. We are forced to wait for that trial. We can't do anything with that building, even though we have a plan with London Group, a development group, to put together a future plan of that parcel. We have 3 different designs, but in the middle of that the fire happened and we're into the litigation. Until that judgment is reached the lawyer advised us not to do anything. We fenced around the perimeter and disposed of some trash. We've been doing everything we can.*

*Moermond: no, you haven't.*

*Dube: we've installed cameras, they get moved. We've been trying our best. The most difficult part is this litigation that prevented us from doing anything. We hope this is settled in judgment, maybe final decision in March.*

*Hoffman: no changes at the property. No Performance Deposit posted, and no application for Code Compliance inspection.*

*Dube: I believe we did pay the \$5,000—*

*Moermond: annual Vacant Building fee?*

*Dube: yes.*

*Moermond: that's different.*

*Dube: he paid a couple weeks ago. I know he asked for payment immediately.*

*Moermond: I do see the taxes have been paid.*

*[Dube calls Director Mohammed Ambo by personal phone]*

*Dube: he didn't know, he thought it was a \$5,000 pending assessment.*

*Moermond: I do see you have Vacant Building fees due and owing, both last year 2023-2024 and now we're looking at 2024-2025. You should know that right now the Center has \$10,800 in levied assessments that will go on your 2026 property taxes. Those are special assessments that will go on your property tax statement if they remain unpaid. There's another \$5,925 under consideration by Council and forthcoming. That's a lot of assessments. Included in that is the \$5,082 for the annual Vacant Building fee.*

*I look for a consistent handful of things to be done before I'd recommend the Council gives time to rehab the property: Code Compliance Inspection Report; \$5,000 Performance Deposit posted. I'm not seeing any of that which are the first steps that need to be taken care of. I do see the pending and owing taxes were paid, but there is another \$16,000 coming down the way. And that doesn't get to the point of fixing the building. I understand you have drawings of what you want it to be.*

*Dube: yes, three different designs.*

*Moermond: once there is an inspection report, we need a sworn construction statement/scope of work, they should have prices and a schedule attached to them. The letter from this attorney reinforces my concern. You want the City to wait until there's an indefinite solution from the Court. That has no guarantee. What your insurance company may be paying for is the loss of the building rather than the fixing of the building. I don't know what the opportunities are for you folks to do more now. It sounds like there isn't cash on hand, which isn't uncommon with a nonprofit, but I need a faster outcome on this. This would be the Council stopping everything for six months, and then another six months before the work could even potentially be done. That puts us a year out before we could even potentially have a solution. I am hearing from the neighborhood it has been a hard situation from them. Mr. Hoffman stated the City writes a lot of orders for maintenance and issues a lot of work orders completed by the City. In a lot of cases the City has been your property manager. I'm looking at assessments: boarding and securing, tall grass and weeds, graffiti removal, garbage cleanup, multiple times in a one year period. Assessments coming forward because the work wasn't done by the Center. Those are things that certainly the check is going to be forthcoming at some point but I'm not seeing good management up to this point. Mr. Hoffman said the past month things have been in ok shape for what it is. The*

history is not good for being on top of things.

*Dube: if we pay the Performance Deposit now, and the Code Compliance application, we are hopeful based on our conversation with the attorney yesterday, he's pushing for a faster settlement with the insurance. Probably March or December. As the board chair, the community wants to revive that place. It is very historical. They don't want to sell or abandon it. They want to make it a better place than before by knocking down everything down the road. But in the meantime we've been sending contractors to completely clean the building and make it active until we raise enough money to do the plan I was talking about. Ground plus units on top. That's what we're thinking down the road. Within a year or two. We need support from the City and understand our financial limitations. We want to keep that history as a religious place, community place. We want to bring in multi-unit housing on top. Partly business and religious place on first floor. That's down the road. We are paying millions of dollars in debts. But with limited resources and paying for the large facility we are at now, all of that is what is limiting us now. We will know after that hearing if we can be ambitious as the next couple of years, but the best thing to do is restore the building as is and restore heat and electric and start using it until we can completely level it out. Whatever we can do with limited resources, but we need time. Make it operational until we can do our plan.*

*Dr. Abdurahim Doyo: as Oman sad, this place is very important to the community. We started growing our community place, but things happened last year, that didn't allow us to do anything with that building. We are struggling with insurance. Still going to court and waiting for the settlement. We are going to try our best to use it to invest in our community.*

*Osman Hussein: I agree with what they said. I wanted to say thank you.*

*Moermond: I'm not feeling great about these circumstances, you can tell by the way I'm talking about it. The path forward may look different than what you are looking for. I think there's a distinct possibility that the building is going to be demolished by the City. That would take you from here to an insurance conversation about recouping costs for your loss and the ability to apply that towards redevelopment of the site. That could look like your future plans. I do know the parcel is worth something, it is an asset you hold. I do want to hold this so your attorney can be present, so we will talk again before this goes to Council.*

*Daniel Eshetu: over the last 2 months I've been doing a project on a home in the area and spending a lot of time there. I saw a young boy cutting the overgrown grass. From my perspective someone cutting the grass shows intent to maintain. They aren't abandoning it or they wouldn't take the effort to cut the very overgrown grass. I just wanted to say something on their behalf as a member of the community showing they are trying to keep it for the longevity.*

*Anita Alexander: in addition to what I said last month, I'm listening to the thoughts and plans and it is disappointing because we were hoping we didn't go into the winter with our property and the repercussions of things not being maintained. The snow removal and everything else. We'd really like to see that if they aren't meeting the requirements we'd at least like the building to come down so it isn't a continued eyesore for the neighborhood. I have worked closely with the City and send in orders all the time, personally I'd like to be done doing that. I'd like our crews to take care of our own church and surrounding area and not have to be concerned because that building IS part of our community. We're not going to look terrible, but it also allows the unhoused to do damage to both their building and ours. We get broken windows and graffiti and*

we believe its because of the overall view of the area.

Moermond: let me clarify, you have work crews addressing your grounds. Does your crew also take care of the neighbor? You call things in?

Alexander: I use the written format to submit things. Our work crews mainly do trash and feces pickup. We pick it up on our property border, but if it's over here there we do that too. It gets old.

Moermond: you're all people in good faith, and I do appreciate that. To answer Ms. Alexander's question of timing. If the Council issues the order to remove. They say within 15 days, and in those 15 days they'd look for you to pull a demolition permit by a licensed contractor, then the City gives a limited length of time to do the work. If that isn't done, the City will take over and put this out for bid. So, two weeks from November 19 takes us to the week of December 5th, it would go to bid for 2 weeks.

Hoffman: typically, yes, right now I need extra approvals for that so it may be a little longer.

Moermond: so, let's say early to mid-January, then you pick the contractor based on the bid they put in and past experiences with them. Once the City hires the contractor they do a hazardous materials assessment and cut the utilities. Depending on those findings, the demolition puts us Mid-February.

Hoffman: correct.

Moermond: if it happens in the winter do you want the pavement dug up then?

Hoffman: we may issue a partial payment for work done, but the contract isn't satisfied and fully paid until it is back to a vacant lot planted with grass, curb cuts removed. No asphalt.

Moermond: so realistically into March. Almost all of that applies to you doing the demo on your own as well. The only difference would be the bid time. I think it would be a chance if we talked to Mr. Dooley in this setting and hear more about his perspective. You've heard I have concerns. I want to be above-board about those. Delaying work on this is kicking the can down the road and creates an ongoing nuisance if the present looks like the past. I'll put this on my calendar for Monday, November 10th and hopefully your attorney can be present. Otherwise, this has a Council Public Hearing November 19th.

#### **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.*

*No one appeared*

*Moermond: we don't have anyone in to testify.*

*Staff report by Supervisor James Hoffman: The building is a two story, wood frame, single-family dwelling with a detached two-stall garage on a lot of 5,009 square feet. The property was condemned by Code Enforcement on May 1, 2023, and was referred to Vacant Buildings with files opened on May 23, 2023.*

*The current property owner is Phillip and Arlene Johnson, per AMANDA and Ramsey County Property records.*

*On July 23, 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 25, 2025, with a compliance date of September 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 \$25,000 on the land and \$138,200 on the building. Real estate taxes for 2023, 2024 and 2025 are delinquent in the amount of \$7,969.50, which includes penalty and interest. The property is scheduled for tax forfeiture on July 31, 2027.*

*The vacant building registration fees are now due and owing. As of October 27, 2025, a Code Compliance Inspection has not been done. As of October 27, 2025, the \$5,000 performance deposit has not been posted. There have been sixteen Summary Abatement Notices since 2023. There have been eleven work orders issued for: Garbage/rubbish, Boarding/securing and Tall grass/weeds. Code Enforcement Officers estimate the cost to repair this structure exceeds \$100,000. The estimated cost to demolish exceeds \$30,000.*

*Moermond: we heard from Arlene Johnson's health care manager and she said holding this house as an asset is making it difficult for her to access the funds she needs for healthcare. I think she's misunderstanding that when it is demolished it doesn't become someone else's problem, Arlene still retains that parcel. I don't know what condition Ms. Johnson is, I do know Mr. Philip Johnson is deceased and won't be helping. I can only recommend this is removed within 15 days.*

**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).*

*Robert Lankfard, owner, appeared*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: October 13, 2025 we issued a correction notice to discontinue parking on an unapproved surface until it has an approved site plan. Discontinue. He has a nice garage, a nice space next to eh garage, there is class 5 there but there may be an extension into the backyard. With snow emergencies and parking emergencies getting a place next to the garage probably isn't going to be an issue, and it has been there for quite some time.*

*Lankfard: I've been parking in those areas for 20 some years. I had a fire in 2006, and most of my backyard was class 5 including the area I park with my boat and trailer. When I built the garage it took up a lot of the area so I didn't think there was a problem with still parking there. I did move my one boat out of the front, instead of the street, but I put it in my garage. What triggered this is because the alley there is a lot of illegal parking and cars all over the place. I keep my stuff neat, it has been that way for decades. I do agree with Inspector Kedrowski, who first talked to me about it, I was getting ready to put a slab in. What triggered this is I had some rebar and he was doing inspection and told me I can't do that. I never saw this Vang person at all.*

*Moermond: you mentioned a fire.*

*Lankfard: it was around the same time as Hurricane Katrina, so it took a long time for our house to get done because all the contractors went south. That's also when we built the garage.*

*Moermond: your entire back yard was gravel, then you had the fire in 2006, and built a new garage at that time. So the gravel in the backyard went away but-for the area beside the garage. So, it was preexisting.*

*Lankfard: yes.*

*Martin: looking at the photos from 2011 the entire backyard is grass. Moving forward it looks 2018 it was still grass. The only concern we have with this parking situation is the side-yard set back and that's probably why Kedrowski mentioned the site-plan review before he pours cement. That's a lot of money to spend if it has to be pulled back out.*

*Lankfard: and I don't want the concrete there. I just need some place to park.*

*Moermond: but you didn't access photos from 2006 or before?*

*Martin: 2016 it shows grass in the backyard and beside garage looks like just dirt. It looks like it has been a parking space for quite some time.*

*Lankfard: the part in discussion now was never grass.*

*Moermond: I'm going to take this as pre-existing because it was there. If it is preexisting class-5 gravel the main thing is maintaining what is already there. Right now, it looks more dirt than gravel again, so I'm going to look for you to maintain and clean that up. I think the set back is 3 feet, so you're going to want to put in some sort of border or barrier between the gravel and the 3 foot area. We know gravel migrates. Railroad ties or something to keep it from migrating to the neighbor's and across your*

yard. Make it obvious it has that 3 foot set back.

Lankford: I do have a fence on that side. It is a wood privacy fence.

Moermond: that does make me feel better about migrating gravel as well. I'm going to say keep that 3 foot separation if for no other reason than keeping an inspector from bugging you again. I'm convinced it was a preexisting condition. Let's not have it be longer than the garage, have it match the length of the garage.

Lankford: that's how it is. I was talking about the spot in the yard where I have the gate.

Moermond: I'm looking at a picture with a trailer. What do you think a deadline that would work for you is? Thanksgiving?

Lankford: I can have it done by then.

Moermond: that's probably simplest. I will say if you change it out at all you will have to go to asphalt or concrete or some other type of surface. The alley is paved, and they make those decisions based on that.

**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.*

*Deborah Ruberto, owner, appeared via phone*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: October 10, 2025 a Summary Abatement Order was issued to all the property owners on that strip to remove 10 to please remove and dispose of the boats, contents, broken temporary structure, furniture, appliance, refuse and debris from the property by October 17 as well as a boat and trailer, Cadillac and Bonneville in a Vehicle Abatement Order.*

*Moermond: you wrote these don't belong to you.*

*Ruberto: I don't drive. I don't own a boat. The City let the owner before I moved in pour concrete in our community property. Install a giant car shed. The only thing I have is a rain bucket by my garage door. That's all that's mine in the entire backyard.*

*Moermond: let's walk through the implication. You're getting this order as you are part of the same complex since it is a condo set up. Even though they belong to someone else in the condo, everyone gets the same orders since it's the same property. If Mr. Owens doesn't take care of his property there will be a bill if the City does it, that bill*

would be divided by units and you'd get the responsibility for 1/5th of the bill. He should owe money to you if that happens, and you could go after him on it, but because it is a condo that is shared area. That stinks for you and I get that.

Ruberto: if it's a shared area why did the City allow him to pour concrete or put up a permanent shed?

Moermond: I don't have permits in front of me to know what's going on. I just don't know. Because it is there doesn't mean he pulled a permit to do it. We see a fair bit of that.

Ruberto: I know, because the next door neighbor went to court to fight it and they let him keep it.

Moermond: I don't know what happened there, but I can tell you what the City does doesn't change your condo agreement.

Ruberto: why does he have to move the vehicles? They've been there for 25 years. I don't understand that part.

Martin: vehicles all need to be operational, have current tabs, be parked on an approved surface, the boat trailer has flat tires. That applies to all vehicles.

Moermond: the trailer itself is missing vital parts, on an unapproved surface, and has flat tires. The Cadillac is on an unapproved surface, and the Bonneville is lacking current tabs, appears inoperable, and is also on an unapproved surface. That needs to be taken care of or the City will tow them. The simplest thing for everyone involved is to take care of it yourself.

Ruberto: we fought for years and then went to court because we'd finally had it with the City not helping. And then there's a picture with the front of my house. What's up with that? I have 3 grandchildren living with me.

Moermond: I'm not seeing an issue with the kid's toys. They're plastic, the City wouldn't ask for those things to be removed.

Martin: no, it is just a photo showing the conditions and there is no issue at the front of her property. It is all pretty much in the back with the vehicles.

Ruberto: ok, that's the part that confused me. I'll go talk to Emmett again, but I'm telling you he is going to fight it. There was a lady who dealt with him for about 20 years, he does what he wants and gets away with it. The car shed can stay? I'm trying to figure out exactly what has to be done. He's had a metal one there for 20 years.

Moermond: the orders say the temporary structure has to go. When I reviewed the photographs with staff, and we talked about this with Emmett, it was obvious that the temporary structure was missing parts. They were laying on the ground. It can only be there temporarily, not a permanent garage.

Ruberto: oh, so the one in fairly good condition has to be removed also? There's one directly behind my house that is tan that has to be removed?

Moermond: yes. We have a tarp over hanging it. He could get a regular shed but what he has now looks to be a temporary building. They aren't meant to be up forever.

*Ruberto: ok. I will try talking to the neighbors, but we'll be in for a fight with Emmett.*

*Moermond: I'm so sorry you're in the position.*

*Ruberto: the City allows him to do stuff that was fought for years and now we're paying for it even though it was fought in court. I'm not getting that.*

*Moermond: I don't have access to those records so I can't speak on that, but the condo association stuff is kind of cooked into the law that way.*

*Ruberto: I'll talk to him. How long does he have to get this done? I know he appealed too.*

*Moermond: we said January 21 to deal with the weights and boxing things, but everything else done by November 24.*

*Ruberto: I'm writing that down. Oh, he has to remove all his gym stuff too?*

*Moermond: yes.*

*Ruberto: Oh, ok.*

*Moermond: we will send a letter telling you this and also send you a copy of the letter he got so you know what it says. Both of these will be on the November 12th Council agenda. You both can speak to the Council at that time if you choose to.*

**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.*

*Johnny Howard, owner, appeared*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: orders issued October 9th, 2025 to remove and properly dispose of some tires, scrap wood, plastic barrel, metal barrel and miscellaneous garbage and debris from the entire property, especially the rear.. Metro mosquito control number given to remove the tires at no cost. Issued by Inspector Vang. Compliance date of October 16.*

*Howard: they're new tires, on rims on class 5, top of a tarp, sitting in the corner. I don't understand the issue. There are no mosquitos.*

*Moermond: are you going to use them?*

*Howard: yes.*

*Moermond: store them inside until you use them. You can't have tires on the outside.*

Shed. Garage. It is clear you can't store tires outside.

Howard: I asked Mr. Vang to send me that. That's really in there? That they can't be on a surface like that? All those tires stacked up as high as a house I see sitting there? There's a problem with mine?

Moermond: yeah. Clean no on that. Then it is about timing, which we will come back too. I would not want to have the City take those tires away, they can't be stored indefinitely on the exterior regardless of how you have them stored. Moving on to the scrap wood and construction materials. What is the plan there?

Howard: it isn't on the ground. Did they send you the pictures?

Moermond: yes.

Howard: they're not big black ugly rusted barrels. They match my flower pots.

Martin: they're 55-gallon drums.

Moermond: is there anything in them?

Howard: they're just painted.

Moermond: so empty.

Howard: and I have my decking off the ground.

Moermond: well, that is a requirement for storage of fire wood, but construction materials no.

Howard: it is elevated.

Moermond: it is, but it is construction materials. What is the plan with those?

Howard: it is decking. We were replacing boards on the deck a bit at a time.

Moermond: is there a time when you'll be done?

Howard: [no answer to the question] Are the barrels all right in my yard?

Moermond: I'm inclined to say they can stay.

Howard: the wood is up, behind the barrel, stacked neatly, tightly with a strap around them.

Moermond: and I will say that storage of construction materials on the exterior of the property is not ok in the code, the same way tires isn't. I am looking for a way and timeline for this to be dealt with so I can craft something that makes sense for your situation. I'm not trying to make your life more difficult. If you told me that next spring you are replacing the deck then, no problem, that makes sense. But in terms of periodically using them when they need to be replaced, this isn't the place to keep them forever.

Howard: I hear what you are saying. Tell me about the debris. There is a stair tread

and ten 2x4's. I ride around the City and it is hard to imagine even being here looking at those pictures and looking at the rest of the City. It is 2 x 4's and there's garbage all over the City. The stair tread is 12 feet. It says other miscellaneous debris. Can you show me in the pictures?

Moermond: they may be talking about the stair treads. Honestly looking at this I can't see what the inspector was referencing for the debris.

Howard: I walk around---I really like grass. I want to see those pictures.

Martin: there's a black tarp under the tires. By the chair there's scrap wood.

[inspector photos shown on screen]

Moermond: I'm not seeing debris per se.

Martin: if they take the tires and leave the tarp—we don't list out every single item outside. Miscellaneous debris—no exterior storage.

Howard: it says especially from the rear of the property.

Moermond: is that a cover-all statement?

Martin: yes.

Moermond: in the back specifically, we have the tarp. Nothing from the front. Department of Safety & Inspections uses the phrase as a "catch all". Is that a single-car garage?

Howard: yes. I don't think I could have it any neater. The wood in the back is treated lumber. The brick thing is a block. There are no loose bricks. What about the chair?

Moermond: that's an exterior chair, it is fine.

Martin: it is a double garage.

Howard: yeah, it is. After I took the wood out of the garage. I apparently moved it after you took your pictures. So, what do you want me to do? I really don't feel good being here.

Moermond: no, no one does.

Howard: its just dumb things. I'm not trying to throw anyone else's property under there, but those barrels—I don't see the need for them to move. I don't know. What are we doing here? [mumbles] It don't feel right.

Moermond: one of the things you touched on earlier was how you see garbage around the City and you're thinking this isn't the same, and I agree. There's complaint based inspection for both the garbage, garbage bags, and the construction materials and tires. I have a ton of appeals related to orders and also a ton of assessments for property clean ups on garbage in yard. That's a ton of what the City does in that regard. I do know there's plenty there and a limited number of inspectors and we just deal with the calls that come in.

Howard: the stair treads on the ground, and the construction material wasn't even in the picture so, wasn't in the yard either. In my pictures it was more wood, not yours.

Moermond: the thing is you are looking to be able to keep the tires outside as well as what?

Howard: it is neat as heck. The stair tread, I'm hoping I can return it since it hasn't been cut. The other stuff I just....I don't know.

Moermond: is there a reason you can't store it in your garage?

Howard: I just don't.

Moermond: you don't like it in there.

Howard: yeah, I mean. What about on the inside of my yard, the same materials? Is that illegal too?

Moermond: it isn't inside a building and that's the rule.

Howard: if I have a piece of metal and put it between the two rims, would that be alright then?

Moermond: no.

Howard: that's what a trailer is. Two tires—

Moermond: connected to a trailer, in use as tires.

Howard: and that's alright.

Moermond: They aren't being stored as tires. Same as tires on a car, which get written up if they're flat typically. The code says it shall be unlawful to accumulate and store building materials, lumber, boxes, cartons, portable storage containers, intermodal storage containers, or other containers. Machinery, scrap metal, junk, raw materials, or fabricated goods. Tires are covered in chapter 45, the nuisance code. This is the property maintenance code. This seems like a doable project. If you are going to put them to use I'm happy to give plenty of time to do that. At the same time, the same code applies to everyone, including me. You've been in this business Mr. Howard, I think you know how it works. I think you've cleaned these properties up at some point. It is the end of October. I think it's reasonable to expect these would be put to use or removed—and put to use means if the board is for the deck, then the board is one the deck—

Howard: I didn't get written up for those so. I'm going to move the tires. I'll take the stair things back to Menards today. Those aren't garbage on the ground so..

Moermond: and we just talked about that.

Howard: everything on that order will be done.

Moermond: I'll push this to December 12th.

Howard: you want the tires moved by December 12th?

*Moermond: tires, scrap wood addressed by then. We'll send that forward to Council and you can testify to them if you want a different outcome, that's what that's there for.*

*Howard: I should move the stuff and then come to Council and then complain?*

*Moermond: no, I'm trying to give you a long deadline. We'll put this in front of Council November 12th. They can vote on the deadline I'm recommending to you, or the order itself. It is their discretion on how they handle it. The next stop is Council on the 12th, with a deadline way in December. Staff will drive by after that deadline to see if it is taken care of. Again, the Council could look at it differently than I do. I can only call it by the code and we need a time certain to have things done. Hopefully a couple of months does the trick. I'm sorry, I know that isn't what you're looking for.*

*Howard: I think it should be revisited, even the wording. I'll come on the 12th.*

**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.*

*Dennis Grahs, owner, appeared*

*[Moermond gives background of appeals process]*

*Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: October 16, 2025 there was a notice of condemnation and order to vacate for October 22. Currently 36 items on the condemnation order issued by Inspector Kedrowski. I've reached out to Ramsey County to see about services. He started taking care of things already, a lot of the first floor. We'd like to see we can get a dumpster. We'll put a plan together for deadlines depending on funding and assistance from the County. He may need to get rid of some things.*

*I personally served this condemnation because we had to board up the front of the house. I believe that's why the mail carrier didn't bring this notification to him in a timely manner. That is another reason for asking for a bit of an extension. When I was there he had started cleaning things, I haven't been out since. He's assured me he's continued to do a lot of the cleaning. It was a fire hazard and cluttered and filled with a lot of recycling. Missing walls, holes in floors. I'm not sure many of the appliances even work in the home. Missing handrails. Upstairs is boarded. We couldn't get up there. Just getting to the front there's not even full stairs, and a hole in the roof. That's why we had it boarded so no emergency responders would be injured.*

*Grahs: there are some issues with the 36 issues I have. All the floors in my house are in place. The entire first floor is all finished maple or bamboo. Nothing wrong. The live-load rating is 50 lbs/square foot because its heavy duty built. My washer and dryer work. My bathroom on the first floor is fine just needs to be cleaned. The steps going*

upstairs, the lumber is precut for the treads but will take time to install. The handrails are stocked outside and were taken away by the City during a property cleanup. I am my own cabinet maker, so if I don't want doors on my cabinets I don't need them. The lower cabinets are not in place. The carcasses are in place. My oven went bad so I had to remove the cabinets. These will cost me nothing to do. My pantry is 100 percent cleaned out. Ceilings are perfect. All the walls except for the dining room wall which was going to have a large window. Unfortunately, as I got older I wasn't able to maintain the 12 hour a day work schedule. I'm in good health for my age. I am addressing these things one by one. First is cleaning out all the debris. Getting that out of the way. I've lived there for 40 years. It's only gotten out of hand in the last 2 years. It started when the City switched to City-wide service. Prior to that I had a four-yard dumpster in my yard with access to the alley. They took everything. After the transition I no longer have space for a lot of the stuff I used to. That's just a comment. I've never had a fire. I was a licensed electrician in Missouri years ago. I have a bazillion tools. I was a systems tech at 3M. I'm very likeable. None of that has bearing on this case.

[recess]

Moermond: I was just reviewing the list to see what I thought needed immediate attention and how they should be addressed and in what order. I see a large fire hazard. The problems with the electrical wiring increase the risk. Layered on top of that are the issues with the smoke and carbon detectors. You have a large fire load; it burns long and hot. That is a problem. Taking that with the ability for you or emergency responders to navigate that space. That's a fact.

Grahs: I have had carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors functional since they came out and hardwired backup smoke detector.

Moermond: it says you need them within 10 feet of sleeping areas.

Grahs: they're within 6 feet of the bedroom door.

Moermond: the inspector will check that.

Martin: item 15 is actually fine, he does have an emergency escape window from his bedroom. We boarded the front, but he still has two other doors he can get out.

Moermond: those are my initial thoughts.

Grahs: it is fine the way it is.

Moermond: it is written the orders so I'm not happy until it is confirmed.

Grahs: got it. They don't know the whole picture I guess.

Moermond: well, they know the fire code. I cannot emphasize enough that getting this cleaned out is important. I see people with a background like yours, hoarding and bringing more things in, and very slow to get things out. You need to do some rapid decision-making and that's usually the hardest thing for someone in your circumstance. You can't get repairs done until you can get to the area that needs repair. I'm willing to look at a two-week extension, but during that time I need a plan: what order will you do things in, timing of repairs, what is the cost associated. What supplies, the cost of a permit, labor. I know you're going to work with Ms. Martin and

*get some assistance. I need to see a realistic plan. I want to keep you in your house, but I also want to keep you safe in your house.*

*Do you have family?*

*Grahs: an estranged daughter. My wife is dead. The closest relative is in Eau Claire, WI. If this would have happened five years ago, I would have had six neighbors helping me in a heartbeat. They're all gone. Moved on. I have two friends I've had for 40 years; we get together once a year. So no, no.*

*Moermond: so it is important to pull in outsiders from House Calls. As we get older it gets harder and harder to find people to help with these things.*

*Grahs: somewhere on these there's something that says there must be 30" of clearance between water heater and surrounding objects?*

*Moermond: yes.*

*Grahs: when I had the plumbing inspector in my house, Dennis, he came over and tested it and looked at the position of my water heater, right to my furnace, and said I can understand why you did that because of the plumbing. These are fine points in here that need further discussion. We'll go down that road when we get to it, but there are things that are worded in a way that's confusing.*

*Moermond: does your electrical panel have clearance?*

*Grahs: yes.*

*Moermond: that's written up as well.*

*Grahs: I don't know why.*

*Moermond: that's going to be one of the first places fire-fighters go to if you have a fire. They will get the gas turned off and go to your electrical panel. Those two things have be easy access.*

*Grahs: normally in a case like that they pull the outdoor meter.*

*Moermond: I want that panel cleared. Let's get that plan. If you want to ask Ms. Martin she's a great resource.*

*Martin: if we could have Mr. Grahs continue to work on items 24 and 25. I'd like to come over on Monday the 10th and we'll walk through this list and come up with a plan for Ms. Moermond's approval.*

*Moermond: Monday the 10th is a hearing day because of Veteran's day on Tuesday.*

*Martin: how about November 12th?*

*Grahs: yes, but write it down I have no clue.*

*Martin: November 12th at 10 am.*

*Grahs: there's an issue with letter delivery due to the boarding.*

*Moermond: you have an email address here. Do you check it?*

*Grahs: every day.*

*Moermond: we'll email our letter to you. Have a work plan to me by Friday November 14 and we'll have the Legislative Hearing again November 18th.*

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