

Vang, Mai (CI-StPaul)

From: Wessam Sonbol <wsonbol@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 28, 2022 10:21 AM
To: *CI-StPaul_LegislativeHearings
Subject: 1446 Rice St

To whom it may concern -

My name is Wessam Sonbol, owner of the property located at 1446 Rice St, St Paul, MN 55117.

I am sending this email in regards to the legislative hearing in regards to the Vacant Building Fee.

I am struggling to understand the purpose of this fee, along with ALL the other fees we keep paying to the city, including taxes, licensing fees and various permits. While the building is vacant and no one is living there, my team has been working non-stop to bring the building up to code. So, why am I getting hit with a fee while investing my effort and money to bring this building back up to code? Given all the taxes and other fees involved, this just seems like an extra penny that the city is looking to suck our blood with.

In addition, I purchased this building for \$240,000 and yet I have paid over \$20,000 in taxes and permits for 2021, which is quite unfair. I have contested the amount and am still waiting to hear further on why I am still getting taxed as if this building is worth \$500k. I have had workers working on the building over the past year, but unfortunately due to COVID, delays have occurred due to multiple reasons:

1. Material unavailability
2. Sick workers
3. One of the meters for building has been out of stock for nearly 6 months
4. Various code changes
5. Further permit requests

When I look at neighboring properties that are NOT vacant, their building has more garbage around their lot than mine ever had. I also have hired someone to look after the building to ensure the lot is clean and no garbage left in the lot.

The amount of money the city is requesting from us is VERY unfair for someone that is trying to bring life back to this place. Have mercy on the people trying to do good and clean up the neighborhood.

Cheers,

-Wessam
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