



Ramsey County Property Records and Revenue

Taxpayer Services – Tax Forfeited Lands · PO Box 64097 · Saint Paul, MN 55164-0097

June 3, 2014

City of Saint Paul, City Council Research
Attn: Marcia Moermond
15 Kellogg Blvd W Suite 310
Saint Paul, MN 55102

RECEIVED
JUN 10 2014
CITY CLERK

Re: Repurchase application relating to a tax-forfeited property at 507 Dale Street N.

Dear Marcia Moermond:

Enclosed please find a repurchase application received from Linda P. Ji, attorney for Rock of Ages Missionary Baptist Church, for the property located at 507 Dale Street N. The property forfeited to the State of Minnesota on August 1, 2013 and is a vacant lot. The owner at the time of forfeiture, Rock of Ages Missionary Baptist Church, is the repurchase applicant. The applicant's attorney has explained the circumstances that led to the forfeiture on the attached application. The amount of delinquent taxes owed on the property at the time of forfeiture was approx. \$62,400.00.

County Board policy, No. 99-507, adopted on December 21, 1999, allows for "each repurchase application to be referred to the municipality in which the property is located. The municipality will document whether the property is considered a municipal problem based on documented police, building code, illegal activity, or health violations within the past five years. The municipality, by resolution, shall recommend that the County Board approve or deny the repurchase application and return the repurchase application to Ramsey County along with the resolution and documentation of any violations."

The following documents are enclosed to assist you:

- Copy of Application to Repurchase after Forfeiture
- Map of the parcel

Please send a certified copy of the city council resolution and all relevant documents to the Tax Forfeited Land office for final processing. If you have any questions regarding the enclosed documents or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (651) 266-2081.

Sincerely,

Kristine A. Kujala, Supervisor
Tax Forfeited Lands

Application to Repurchase after Forfeiture

Pin: 35-29-23-14-0206
Legal Description: Syndicate No. 1 Addition, that part of Lots 1 and 2 North of line running from point on the East line of and 55 12/100 feet South from the Northeast corner of said Lot 1 to the point on the West line of and 55 4/10 feet South from the Northwest corner of said Lot 2, Block 1
Address: 507 Dale Street N, Saint Paul, MN
Forfeiture Date: August 1, 2013

I hereby make application to repurchase the above described parcel of land, located in Ramsey County, from the State of Minnesota, and understand that pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 282.241:

- The owner at the time of forfeiture, or the owner's heirs, devisees, or representatives, or any person to whom the right to pay taxes was given by statute, mortgage, or other agreement, may file an application to repurchase any parcel of land claimed by the state to be forfeited to the state for unpaid property taxes, unless sold or conveyed to a third party.
- The property may be repurchased for the sum of all:
 - Cancelled taxes, including all delinquent real property taxes, plus penalties, accrued interest and costs attributable to the taxes.
 - All property taxes plus penalties, interest and costs on those taxes for the taxes payable year following the year of the forfeiture and all subsequent years through the year of repurchase.
 - All delinquent special assessments cancelled at the time of forfeiture, plus penalties, accrued interest and costs attributable to those assessments.
 - Special assessments not levied between the date of forfeiture and the date of repurchase.
 - Any additional costs and interest relating to taxes or assessments accrued between the date of forfeiture and the date of repurchase.
 - Extra costs related to repurchase and recording of deed.
- A \$250.00 administrative service (repurchase) fee, in certified funds, is due at the time the application is submitted.
- All maintenance costs accrued on the property while under the management of Ramsey County, Tax Forfeited Land, from the date of forfeiture until the adoption of a resolution by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, are to be paid by the applicant.
- Applicant will take possession of the property and be responsible for its maintenance and security upon approval of the repurchase by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners.

The reason or circumstances that led to the forfeiture of the property is (describe hardship):

See attached document.

Return application to: Department of Property Records and Revenue, Attn: Tax Forfeited Lands Section,
PO Box 64097, St. Paul, MN 55164-0097

Application to Repurchase after Forfeiture

Applicant Name: Linda P. Ji, attorney for
Rock of Ages Missionary Baptist Church
Applicant's relationship to the property: Attorney for owner with right of repurchase.
Mailing Address 8362 Tamarack Village Suite 119-451
City, State, Zip Woodbury, MN 55125
Signature Linda P. Ji (attorney) Date April 4, 2014
Phone: 651-206-1058
E-mail Address: Lpji@comcast.net

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 4th day of April,
2014, by Linda P. Ji attorney.

NOTARY STAMP/ SEAL

Given under my hand and official seal of this

4th day of April, 2014

[Signature]
Signature of Notary Public

Notary Commissioner Expires _____

April 9, 2014

Ramsey County, Property Records and Revenue
Property Tax Services, Tax Forfeited Land
PO Box 64097
90 Plato Blvd. W
Saint Paul, MN 55107-2004

RE 507 Dale Street N in Saint Paul, MN, PIN: 35-29-23-14-0206

Dear Property Records and Revenue:

I am writing on behalf of Rock of Ages Missionary Baptist Church (hereinafter "Rock of Ages") with a detailed statement of what led to the forfeiture of the above-referenced property at 507 Dale Street N in Saint Paul. Presently, the property is a vacant lot. Previously it was a historical building known as "Saint Matthews Lutheran Church."

The forfeiture occurred after a long-running battle between the City of Saint Paul (hereinafter "Saint Paul") and the Rock of Ages congregation. Rock of Ages worshipped in the building for decades. It was a historically significant building and placed on the Top 10 Most Endangered List of historical properties for the entire country. Ultimately, Saint Paul hired a contractor to dismantle the building over Rock of Ages' strenuous objection. Saint Paul then assessed about \$100,000 in special assessments for the dismantling also over Rock of Ages' strenuous objection. The contractor and sub-contractors carted off everything of value for sale, including but not limited to the bricks, copper pipes, wooden pews, and the church's solid bronze bell. It is noted that Rock of Ages never received any sort of accounting from Saint Paul or its contractor on this work and how much was received for the items of value. Rock of Ages was told that the salvaged building materials would be used in restoring other historical properties.

Further, after the dismantling, it is believed Saint Paul rezoned the land from T1 to T5. The land has appreciated greatly and is now very valuable. The land is located at the northwest corner of Dale Street and University Avenue where there is a new light rail stop. At this point, Rock of Ages should at least be able to sell its land at the rezoned price. However, it seems that Saint Paul is now trying to take Rock of Ages' land. It is believed that Saint Paul placed a hold on this land and wants to obtain it directly from Ramsey County. Rock of Ages respectfully requests that Ramsey County reject Saint Paul's attempts to take the land. Instead, Rock of Ages believes it would be far more equitable to return title to Rock of Ages so that at least it can explore sale of the land. Any amounts legitimately owed could be paid at the time of sale.

For background: it is believed the trouble between Saint Paul and Rock of Ages started after the announcement of the Central Corridor Light Rail. Shortly thereafter, the Saint Paul Department of Safety and Inspections started giving Rock of Ages difficulty. It sent inspectors who cited building code violations. Rock of Ages contacted the denomination for funds to repair the building. The denomination lined up about \$100,000 for repairs. The repairs were going to go forward with a local contractor and volunteers from the congregation.

Then Saint Paul told Rock of Ages it couldn't hire its own contractor nor work on its own building. Saint Paul said the building was a "historical treasure." Saint Paul warned Rock of Ages that any work attempted would be torn out. Apparently, the church building was one of the first churches built by

German immigrants in Minnesota. It was a brick building with a tall steeple for a bronze church bell. A complete restoration (not simply repairs) would have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. This was not affordable to the small congregation.

Rock of Ages also put the property up for sale. It was approached by a real estate investor interested in purchasing the property. Rock of Ages and a representative of the investor appeared at a Saint Paul City Council meeting to introduce the investor to the City Council. Within a week, the Department of Safety and Inspections slapped a sticker on the Rock of Ages building and told Rock of Ages the building could not be sold.

Saint Paul then had the building dismantled as stated above. There was no warning provided. Men and machines simply arrived and started to jack-hammer off the bricks. Wasn't it still a historical treasure? After the dismantling, Saint Paul asked Rock of Ages to come in and talk about sale of the land. Representatives of Saint Paul offered to pay Rock of Ages \$2000 above the cost of the dismantling so the church could walk away with \$2000 for its building and land. Rock of Ages walked out of the meeting.

Rock of Ages believes Saint Paul has abused its power. It could have purchased the building outright as part of the Light Rail redevelopment. Saint Paul did purchase many buildings around Rock of Ages including the Hmong Funeral Home. It could have allowed Rock of Ages to repair or sell its own building. Instead, Saint Paul blocked all of Rock of Age's efforts to repair or sell its building. Then it offered Rock of Ages \$2000 to walk away. Incredibly, now Saint Paul seeks to acquire Rock of Age's property directly from Ramsey County.

Over the past three years Rock of Ages went to owing nothing for property taxes to more than \$60,000, the vast proportion being dismantling fees and associated late fees and penalties. Rock of Ages disputes the amount assessed for the dismantling at least because the salvaged building materials were sold and no accounting has been provided. Rock of Ages also challenges Saint Paul's actions that led to the dismantling. This was not a situation of a badly-maintained blighted structure with illegal activity occurring within. No, this situation involved a church that worshipped and ministered in the community for decades that happened to be located in a significant historical building on a coming light rail line.

The above events led to the forfeiture. However, Rock of Ages has filed a Notice of Lis Pendens for the property at 507 Dale Street North in Saint Paul. It plans to litigate with Saint Paul over the events described above.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Linda P. Ji", written in dark ink over a horizontal line.

Linda P. Ji
Attorney for Rock of Ages

CC Ramsey County Board of Commissioners



Sherburne Ave