



City of Saint Paul

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Minutes - Final

Legislative Hearings

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Thursday, February 15, 2024

9:00 AM

Room 330 City Hall & Court House/Remote

9:00 a.m. Hearings

Making Finding on Substantial Nuisance Abatements

- 1 **RLH RR 23-64** Making finding on the appealed substantial abatement ordered for 829 THIRD STREET EAST in Council File RLH RR 23-16.

Sponsors: Johnson

Grant an additional 180 days, continuing original \$5,000 PD, and requiring an additional \$5,000 PD be posted by COB February 27, 2024.

Doug Grimm, Northern Value Group LLC, appeared via phone

Staff update by Supervisor Joe Yannarely: since the last hearing there has been one securing of the building and there is a current work order to clean up the debris in the back yard. That was issued a week ago. Building inspector indicates 20% of rehab is done.

Moermond: wow, ok. I do have an update from Llosa, LLC on their work plan to finish. Mr. Grimm have you been using them this whole time?

Grimm: yes, since the beginning.

Moermond: what's going on?

Grimm: I feel it is further than 20%. If you looked at the property it is certainly less than we hoped, but we ran into unexpected exterior issues. The front porch we were hoping to reuse it, we learned we needed to disassemble the entire two-story porch and rebuild it with footings. That was one delay. Then the back we decided to scrap the idea of making a giant deck like it was and did a smaller one. We'd plan to repair that and had to replace it. When we removed the back deck a large portion of the framing members on the back wall had to be replaced. That was unforeseen. Almost around every corner we found something else. This had a serious fire with the third level burned with a hole in the roof. It took a while to get advice from a structural engineer how to correct it and get it safe again. That accounts for most of the delay. The Code Compliance letter was from May 2023. From that day we worked due diligently to bring in the engineer because that needed to happen first because it wasn't safe to be inside. Got the City onboard with the plan. Correcting the framing took time.

Moermond: you submitted a work plan dated May 30, 2023 would have taken into account a lot of what you are talking about and it basically said the project could be done in four months. The delays are delays that doubled the time you estimated. I would have expected that kind of delay could have expected that delay could have been done in the granted time.

Grimm: me too. I totally agree. At the same time, here we are and we're \$130,000 deep into this and almost done. I'll stand by my opinion that having installed the new furnace and new duct work and the plumbing rough in done, the inspector for the electrical rough in should be called by end of week. Those pieces, once the mechanicals are roughed in and completed it should go much more smoothly. We've corrected the major problems bogging us down.

Moermond: and this plan from Monday asks for another 90 days. Because we do have a progress rating less than 50%, you're in a position of forfeiting the \$5,000 Performance Deposit. Instead of doing that I'd like to ask them to continue that Performance Deposit but have you put another \$5,000 down in Performance Deposit and ask them to give you another 180 days to finish this. In for more money and have a lot more time. If you finish, you'll get all that money back again.

Grimm: that works for me.

Moermond: we'll send this to Council March 6. Have the Performance Deposit posted by February 27.

Grimm: there was a time right after the original time ended, January 31, where we couldn't pull permits and because of the deadline passing Department of Safety & Inspections wouldn't allow it. I think they are now pulled, I just wanted to request if the ground could be cleared, as it were, for us to continue work between now and March 6.

Moermond: that won't be a problem. Mr. Yannarely can put a note in the system noting you can pull permits after you post the additional \$5,000. He did mention a work order to clean the backyard, I hope that's done already.

Grimm: I'll make sure it is done.

Referred to the City Council due back on 3/6/2024

2 RLH RR 23-70

Second Making finding on the appealed substantial abatement ordered for 342 THOMAS AVENUE in Council File RLH RR 23-46.

Sponsors: Balenger

If CC certificate isn't issued by March 13, 2024 forfeit \$2,500 of the PD and continue PH to March 20. If still no CC certificate issued, forfeit remaining \$2,500 of PD.

Manuel Crespo, owner, appeared

Moermond: this is the second time we've had a conversation about finishing the job.

Staff update by Supervisor Joe Yannarely: since the last hearing there's been no problems and the Building Inspector says 90% complete.

Moermond: last time was 80%.

Yannarely: on January 16th. Seems close.

Moermond: where are you at timeline wise?

Crespo: pretty much everything is done. The plumber I paid to do the work and provided him the 10 items on the Code Compliance list. He said someone pulled a permit before the house was condemned so he didn't need a permit. He did the work. I wasn't sure because the bathroom ventilation was covered. When I met the inspector yesterday it was an issue for 3 items. I have hired a new contractor. My original contractor I've worked with for 10 years, I trust him and paid him already, and now he's not replying. The new contractor will pull a permit for those 3 items. Then the furnace running and ORSAT items. Hopefully we'll be done soon.

Moermond: we're a month later and at 90%. What's your timeline?

Crespo: he should be done by next week. On 20th I have the final building inspection. As soon as they're done it should be inspected and then we can do the building inspection. I can't foresee anything else coming up.

Moermond: I'm going to put this in front of Council March 13.

Crespo: sure, we should be done by end of month because we have someone moving in on March 1. Plumber was the issue. He said he was going to do it and never called back. The 3 items are the only things left that the new contractor is doing.

Moermond: on March 13 I will be in front of Council and I will say if you aren't done you're going to forfeit \$2,500 of your \$5,000 Performance Deposit. I'll then ask them to continue to March 20, you'll forfeit the other \$2,500. Finish it, we're putting the money on the line. I won't ask for more money. It sounds doable the way you are describing. Almost a month to get these things done. And you could testify and ask them not to forfeit it, you'll be done next week, and they may do that. That's up to them. I think you'll be done.

Crespo: I have to be done. The mistake I did was believing when he said he was done. It wasted 3 months.

Referred to the City Council due back on 3/13/2024

3 RLH RR 23-71 Third Making finding on the appealed substantial abatement ordered for 1941 UNIVERSITY AVENUE WEST in Council File RLH RR 23-49.

Sponsors: Jalali

If CC certificate is not issued, continue CPH to March 20, 2024 and require an additional \$5,000 PD be posted.

*Dawit Solomon, President Eritrean Community Center of MN, appeared via phone
Essey Asbu, Secretary Eritrean Community Center of MN, appeared via phone*

Moermond: who should we be calling in today besides you?

Solomon: Just Essey Asbu.

Staff update by Supervisor Joe Yannarely: the building inspector said it is 90%

complete, he mentioned the electrical permit that was pulled on January 18 needs to be signed off on.

Moermond: pulled January 18. Gentlemen, the building official says 90% and you have pulled the permit now but it needs to be finalized. Where are things at?

Solomon: I just talked to Don. The tuckpointing is done. The electrician is working on it now. We did send an email to be complete by March 1 and I have confirmed this morning he is on schedule to complete March 1.

Moermond: when you talked with Clint Zane did he indicate the building items were done and he was simply waiting for the electric to be addressed?

Solomon: yes, and then the tuckpointing and Don has confirmed that is complete. Just the electrician needs to be wrapping up.

Moermond: honestly we're at a point when I would ask an additional Performance Deposit be required. It doesn't make sense given the amount of public financing, I'd rather we just be done with this and not go down that road. We're a year and a half into fixing an accessory structure that only required 2 permits. I'll put this in front of the City Council March 13 and if those permits aren't finalized I'll ask the Council to continue it a week, and you have to have a new \$5,000 Performance Deposit. A total of \$10,000 on the line. I really don't want to go there. Let's get it done in the next three and a half weeks. I need consequences as we're 18 months in.

Solomon: ok.

Referred to the City Council due back on 3/13/2024

10:00 a.m. Hearings

Making Finding on Substantial Nuisance Abatements

- 4 [RLH RR 24-4](#) Second Making finding on the appealed substantial abatement ordered for 346 SHERBURNE AVENUE in Council File RLH RR 23-38.

Sponsors: Bowie

Layover to LH February 27, 2024 at 10 am for further discussion after progress inspection.

Russ Waletski, owner, appeared via phone

Staff update by Supervisor Joe Yannarely: a progress inspection was to be scheduled with MR. Zane, which wasn't done. Last time Mr. Zane was out it was 10% complete. We have recent warm air and mechanical permits pulled from December. Expired plumbing permit. Building permit from October 2022.

Waletski: Randy approved the electrical work and Mario from HVAC approved the duct work, and Laurent approved the gas and furnace. There is heat and electricity. The building inspector told me to fill some holes in the floor with foam and send her photos. We're starting drywall on the inside. Windows are in. Siding is done on front. Roof is done.

Moermond: and I have no reason to believe or not believe this because you didn't call Mr. Zane to do a progress inspection, which is what I base my decision about your Performance Deposit on. Right now, it is subject to forfeiture and you may be required to post an additional Performance Deposit. That's how important it is to get Mr. Zane out there. This was the same as six months ago. It was in the letter sent to you. I'm walking into today's hearing thinking you are at 10% which is forfeiting \$5,000 and post an additional \$10,000. You need to back me off that by getting that formal assessment by Mr. Zane putting you past the 50% mark at least.

Waletski: I'll call him after this.

Moermond: we'll talk again February 27 and have a Council Public Hearing March 6.

Waletski: the retaining wall has been replaced, that was on the Code Compliance list. It was done with \$6.66 very high-quality block. Inspectors have been impressed with it. It is top shelf.

Moermond: glad to hear it.

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 2/27/2024

5 RLH RR 24-3

Making finding on the appealed substantial abatement ordered for 678 SNELLING AVENUE NORTH in Council File RLH RR 20-22.

Sponsors: Jalali

Grant an additional 180 days to rehab and continue \$5,000 PD.

Lisa Kugler, consultant, appeared
Gene Gelgelu, AEDS, appeared

Moermond: I had Clint Zane review the work plan, given the low level of physical progress, but also the action steps along the way. We knew this was more than a year or two project, with updates along the way.

Staff update by Supervisor Joe Yannarely: the building inspector says about 10% complete. Seems to get hit on a fairly regular basis with graffiti. No other issues than that.

Kugler: Clint Zane was there a couple of weeks ago. Since then, all the underground work was done. Elevator, underground plumbing. They're working on the basement foundation. There is no significant change in plans. It will stay as it is. One issue before the building inspector they need to answer, but otherwise it is going on. I'm told it is ahead of schedule due to the weather being so good. It will be done in August.

Moermond: August, much better than you were originally thinking. Excellent.

Kugler: of course, subject to the usual delays.

Moermond: it seemed to me there was the delay in getting the plans through, and it looks like you've caught up from that delay.

Kugler: yeah.

Moermond: any other updates? Differences? You seem to be experiencing more graffiti than historically happened. That does happen in phases.

Kugler: there is a security system, so no one is getting in. There haven't been any attempted break-ins.

Moermond: would the Department object to sending through another 180 days on this?

Yannarely: no.

Moermond: let's do that. Nuisance is not abated, but we'll ask for an additional 180 days. Council Public Hearing March 13. Any questions?

Kugler: we're just relieved at where we are at.

Moermond: I bet. This has been a long haul for you guys. Congratulations on it moving along so nicely.

Kugler: was your expectation that we wouldn't pull it off? Or that we wouldn't get the money?

Moermond: I expected if the money was there the work would get done. I expect that from everyone. Aunt Martha to people like yourself, with a major project. If those pieces are in place it is highly likely the project will get done.

Kugler: seventeen sources of funding.

Moermond: quite a lift. I don't do the money; I just care it is there.

Referred to the City Council due back on 3/13/2024