



City of Saint Paul

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Minutes - Final

Legislative Hearings

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651-266-8585

Tuesday, January 7, 2025

9:00 AM

Room 330 City Hall & Court House/Remote

9:00 a.m. Hearings

Special Tax Assessments

- 1 **RLH TA 25-9** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1425 GALTIER STREET. (File No. J2506T, Assessment No. 258511)

Sponsors: Kim

Delete the assessment.

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025
- 2 [RLH TA 24-520](#) Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1559 SUMMIT AVENUE. (File No. J2506T, Assessment No. 258511)

Sponsors: Bowie

Layover to LH January 21, 2025 at 9 am (unable to reach PO).

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 1/21/2025
- 3 **RLH TA 25-12** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1822 FORD PARKWAY. (File No. VB2505, Assessment No. 258804)

Sponsors: Jost

Delete the assessment.

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025
- 4 **RLH TA 25-7** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1264 PAYNE AVENUE. (File No. VB2504, Assessment No. 258803)

Sponsors: Kim

Continue PH to July 9, 2025. If property is occupied, delete assessment. Change to Cat 1 VB and allow permits.

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025

- 5 **RLH TA 25-6** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 911 SIMS AVENUE. (File No. VB2504, Assessment No. 258803)

Sponsors: Yang

Delete the assessment.

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025

- 6 **RLH TA 25-5** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 911 SIMS AVENUE. (File No. J2505R, Assessment No. 258508)

Sponsors: Yang

Delete the assessment.

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/12/2025

10:00 a.m. Hearings

Special Tax Assessments

- 7 **RLH TA 25-8** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 776 DESOTO STREET. (File No. CRT2504, Assessment No. 258203)

Sponsors: Noecker

Reduce assessment from \$615 to \$536.

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025

- 8 **RLH TA 25-14** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 896 ARKWRIGHT STREET. (File No. J2507T, Assessment No. 258515)

Sponsors: Kim

Reduce assessment from \$566.50 to \$366.50 and make payable over 4 years.

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025

- 9 **RLH TA 25-10** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 525 MARYLAND AVENUE EAST. (File No. J2507T, Assessment No. 258515)

Sponsors: Kim

Approve the assessment.

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025

- 10 **RLH TA 25-11** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 1064 STINSON STREET. (File No. J2507T, Assessment No. 258515)

Sponsors: Kim

Delete the assessment.

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025

- 11 **RLH TA 25-13** Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 93 SYCAMORE AVENUE WEST. (File No. J2507T, Assessment No. 258515)

Sponsors: Bowie

Approve the assessment.

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025

- 12 [RLH TA 25-16](#) Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 322 WINONA STREET WEST. (File No. J2507T, Assessment No. 258515)

Sponsors: Noecker

Layover to LH January 21, 2025 at 10 am.

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 1/21/2025

Special Tax Assessments-Rolls

- 13 **RLH AR 25-3** Ratifying the assessment for Collection of Vacant Building Registration fees billed during May 2 to July 24, 2024. (File No. VB2505, Assessment No. 258804)

Sponsors: Jalali

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025

- 14 **RLH AR 25-4** Ratifying the assessment for Securing and/or Emergency Boarding services during August 2024. (File No. J2505B, Assessment No. 258104)

Sponsors: Jalali

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025

- 15 **RLH AR 25-5** Ratifying the assessment for Collection of Fire Certificate of Occupancy fees billed during August 7 to September 10, 2024. (File No. CRT2505, Assessment No. 258204)

Sponsors: Jalali

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025

- 16 **RLH AR 25-6** Ratifying the assessment for Excessive Use of Inspection or Abatement services billed during June 21 to July 22, 2024. (File No. J2505E,

Assessment No. 258304)

Sponsors: Jalali

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025

- 17 **RLH AR 25-7** Ratifying the assessment for Graffiti Removal services during July 19 to 29, 2024. (File No. J2505P, Assessment No. 258404)

Sponsors: Jalali

Referred to the City Council due back on 2/19/2025

11:00 a.m. Hearings

Orders to Vacate Code Enforcement

- 18 [RLH VO 24-37](#) Appeal of Amber Duncan to a Notice of Condemnation as Unfit for Human Habitation and Order to Vacate at 973 FRONT AVENUE.

Sponsors: Kim

Property must be vacated by noon on Friday, January 10, 2025.

Amber Duncan, owner/occupant, appeared via phone

Tara Smith, sister, appeared via phone

Tried calling Tara at 11:51 am, went straight to Voicemail: this is Marcia Moermond from St. Paul City Council calling about your sister's property at 973 Front. You're welcome to follow up with us or Amber after the hearing. Our number is 266-8585

Staff update by Supervisor Richard Kedrowski: there were two inspections since December 17. First was January 2, 2025 with St. Paul Police Department and Inspector David Smith. We did do the interior, with the exception of the basement. No access. The interior was in deplorable condition. Heavy mopping in the kitchen, but it appeared water was just dumped on the floor, it was being pushed into vents and corners. Multiple holes, in insulation. Kitchen cabinets coming off wall. Thumb lock missing from door, which makes egress impossible. Clutter blocking egress on stairs, including a chair. Numerous windows broken, one had a pillow stuffed through it. Lots of missing hardware and door trim. Large gap at rear door, weather just coming inside. Exterior had numerous infractions. Rear shed roof that the support posts are just propped underneath. There's OSB rotted through on the roof. Much rotted wood around windows of home. Garage full of debris. Deteriorated paint. Pretty bad shape. Did a follow up inspection yesterday, January 6 to get into the basement. I'm a little reluctant to sign off on the furnace repair on the basis that any reputable contractor would have removed the packaging they used and put the cover back on the furnace. Some modification to the furnace. It does appear to be newer, shiny, no dust, but no permits had been pulled. Water heater had access panels removed.

[Tara Smith added to call]

Kedrowski: my photos show they were on the ironing board and that's 240 volt electric which if kids got near is bad news. Very unsafe. Lots of daisy-chained electrical. There's a dryer with the duct work removed. Some storage in basement, lead water

main coming into the house and the valve before the meter is missing the turnoff handle. There are also some green treated support posts in the basement and not installed correctly. Just on the floor, no footings or plinth blocks. Basement trap door had no hinges or hold-open device. Dog was in the kennel in the kitchen that had a large amount of feces in the kennel. Not normal for one occurrence, this was quite a lot preventing it from even laying down. Ms. Duncan said that was normal, so that concerns me as to the judgment of the safety of the animals.

Smith: the door is on one hinge to the basement. It stays open on the block. Structural stuff was done by a company before we owned it. It had been inspected by the City prior to it. The water meter was just replaced when the furnace was repaired. Everything from the meter before they had no handle because the stop for the water main is beyond the water heater. They took all of that out and put in a stop line after the meter which isn't normal but there was no space before. The City said when they replace the lead line going into the house it will be replaced. The water heater was my fault, the kids are never in the basement, since I can barely lift that hatch. I left those off because we had a furnace guy out and checked the furnace and water heater and we have to put it back on for liability reasons. So that's on me. The furnace is in order, we've had them twice. Water heater had to have heating elements replaced. We put in new washer and dryer in the kitchen so Amber can access them with her disability. These are the things I'm responsible for as landlord. She has a new used working stove.

Moermond: what I heard from staff was the contract for deed from Georgia to Amber was being cancelled.

Smith: no, it is not being cancelled unless the City forces it. Amber owns the property as far as we are concerned. There are things we make sure are in working order as they aren't things she is knowledgeable about.

Moermond: you mentioned you were the landlord and that Amber owns the house, what does that mean?

Smith: Amber is not good when it comes to mechanical things. Since there are things my mom can get ticketed for by the City, we make sure they're working. She does have some disabilities, both physical and mental. It's a mom-daughter-sister side she is still in my mom's care for financial support, which I've begun helping with since my mom is getting older. This is the third house she's had under my parent's care. She will always be under their care. She will always need extra support. We're continuing to work with the City to make sure Amber has a place to live, but we are also very frustrated with the sanitation of the house.

Duncan: I am really trying. I'm not the best at everything. I really don't want to be on the streets with my kids.

Smith: I've never seen her do as well as she has since this started. I have seen a huge change in Amber. I'd ask for more time to make some of this stuff. I thought we were going into this meeting to make a plan for that. That this wasn't the end-all, be all.

Moermond: I was anticipating a plan would have been submitted by Amber or you prior to this hearing; yesterday or Friday. That's a problem.

Smith: ohhhh. I did not understand that when I read the document. I didn't understand I was supposed to submit something like that.

Moermond: well, you weren't. Amber was. However you divide up the responsibility is fine with me but ultimately the responsibility lies with Amber.

Duncan: I'm going to be honest Marcia, with my mental health stuff I didn't understand half of that paperwork, which is why my sister is helping me so much. You have to understand that I am really trying here. I'm doing the best I can to get my house better to get what the City wants. But it is going to take me time. It isn't just a two-week thing and then the whole house is going to be fixed and immaculate. It isn't gonna be that. It may take 3 to 6 months to get everything fixed.

Smith: we can't get the windows fixed. We're trying to work with certain programs. There are things I can do but they will take time. As far as the cleaning I left it up to the 10 people living there, it is their house. If you want to give me 2 days I can write up a plan and submit it.

Moermond: any other comments before I give you mine?

Duncan: when Department of Safety & Inspections I came in the first time you couldn't even walk through the house. It was not safe and I know that. I'm at fault for that because I should have been harder on the people that were living here to help keep it clean. I should have been harder on myself to get up and do stuff that I normally cannot do, just to make sure my house is in good condition. However, since then we have scrubbed all the floors and most of the walls. Gotten rid of tons of garbage which Richard could vouch for. We've been trying to decrease as much stuff that doesn't belong in the house that we can to make it set up as an actual house, not just a pigsty and a playpen for garbage. I do want to be somewhere with my kids. I do want somewhere safe with my kids. I know I've really messed up and I'm trying to do better. I am sorry.

Moermond: no need to apologize. When I originally got the appeal on this condemnation and order to vacate, there were a number of things that were seriously concerning and we talked about those and put first the heat being restored and if that happened we could continue on a work plan to address the other issues remaining so they wouldn't have to be done instantly, but still get done. In the past couple of weeks, I've been looking at whether substantial improvements have been made and then a work plan. I really needed that and I needed the inspectors able to see progress when they came out. I get some things were removed, but I also heard from House Calls that their free dumpster wasn't used at all. Then I look at pictures and see garbage bags on the exterior of the property and I'm thinking that was hundreds of dollars in public money for you and that it didn't happen is disappointing. That really speaks more to the plan and how we get things done than current circumstances. If I look at a snapshot in time, conditions right now, which is the thing I need to look at to make a determination about whether this is a safe, healthy environment for people –adults or children. That's my concern. I have got feedback about the likelihood of you being able to maintain things moving forward and that isn't good. I've heard from you that there are disability issues impacting the ability to get this property clean and safe and maintain it moving forward. I can't consider that when I look at this, aside from how it may influence a work plan. Is it, right now, safe for people to be living in? How can we work on that and the probability of it getting better based on active steps taken.

Despite your needing assistance, I also don't hear any legal guardian in place to take over official decision-making for the property. You are the responsible party. I understand its hard for you, but I can only focus on the health and safety of the

property. When I look at the photos and we just emailed you a police report from January 2, and the photos, I have to say the sanitation issues are really bad. You are mopping the floor the morning of an inspection and it appears to be the first step taken to clean. I find the property to be in a state of extreme dilapidation and interior damage. It is very unsanitary. One could consider that the illnesses experiences could be connected to the sanitation issues. You have over the legal number of animals in the property. I have given you every opportunity I would give others in this situation. In my mind I treated this fairly, given an opportunity to continue to be there and take steps to get it habitable. This isn't a safe house to live in and there's no imminent end in sight. I just don't think this is tenable right now, not doable. My recommendation to the Council is the property be vacated by noon on Friday. The Council may look at it differently, you can definitely testify. You now have the police report. Animal control has to be notified. Child protective services has to be notified. Police have concerns about the safety of the property, particularly the children. I spoke with Officer Perez this morning, and I said if he has those concerns there's nothing in this process stopping you from pursuing this. The Council Public Hearing is tomorrow at 3:30. I'll be writing a letter similar to the one in December. Then it becomes Vacant Building rules, which allows people in there to clean between 8 am and 8 pm. With number of people, animals, and sanitation and damage in the house I can't see my way clear.

Smith: the animals need to be turned over to animal control?

Moermond: no, re-homed. Whether it is someone you know, or animal control. They can't stay in an empty house. Are there turtles too?

Smith: yes, a big fish tank with turtles. My main concern is keeping the property secure and keeping the water lines from freezing. We'll have to figure out what the Vacant Building program means for us long-term.

Moermond: you may want to look at dealing with things that require water earlier, and then decide to winterize it so you can drain the pipes and turn the heat off.

Smith: we'll probably keep it on so we can get it cleaned out. During the vacancy if we get it back to some sort of level of repair do we go back to the City so Amber can live in it again? Is there a process to that?

Moermond: if this goes into the Vacant Building program, this will be a Category 2 Vacant Building. It has significant housing code violations and was condemned. You will have to get an inspection report from the City to bring it into minimum code compliance. Once those are done it can be reoccupied. That means pulling permits, doing the work, and getting them finalized. You could move back in then. That's how the bureaucracy works at the City.

Duncan: no one needs to file with animal control or CPS because it has already been done. Animal control is trying to work with me as it is. CPS has been out numerous times.

Moermond: and I don't have any control over either of those. Maybe we will see you tomorrow. I'm sorry this isn't working out.

Duncan: that was the other thing. Is there any way to make that a little earlier? I have to work at 4:30 and my van's breaks went out so I have to take the bus. That means I have to leave around 3:30.

Moermond: there's no way for the Council to begin before 3:30.

Duncan: ok. Can I do it over the phone?

Moermond: you'd have to have signed up today for that before noon. Can Tara speak on your behalf?

Duncan: she can. It wouldn't be fair for the date for me to have to have it in because I didn't even know we were having a meeting tomorrow.

Moermond: it was in the letter I sent you.

Smith: I can't, I have to take Dad to a doctor appointment at 3.

Moermond: if you have testimony then, put it in writing and we can put it in front of Council in writing. We'll send a letter following the Council meeting.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/8/2025

Summary & Vehicle Abatement Orders

- 19 **RLH SAO 24-82** Appeal of Joseph Richardson to a Summary Abatement Order and a Vehicle Abatement Order at 1875 NORTH PARK DRIVE. (Refer to January 7, 2025 Legislative Hearing)

Sponsors: Johnson

Grant to January 27, 2025 for compliance with SAO. Grant to February 3, 2025 for compliance with VAO.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/22/2025

Making Finding on Nuisance Abatements

- 20 [RLH SAO 25-1](#) Making finding on the appealed nuisance abatement ordered for 317 DALY STREET in Council File RLH SAO 24-81.

Sponsors: Noecker

The nuisance is abated and the matter resolved.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/15/2025

Correction Orders

- 21 **RLH CO 25-1** Appeal of Shyann Murphy to a Correction Notice at 2151 MINNEHAHA AVENUE EAST.

Sponsors: Johnson

Grant the appeal, and grant to January 24, 2025 for compliance with moving vehicle(s) to approved surface.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/22/2025

1:00 p.m. Hearings**Vacant Building Registrations**

- 22 RLH VBR 24-73** Appeal of Shawn Punjwani, Embassy Thomas LLC, to a Vacant Building Registration Notice at 1333 THOMAS AVENUE.
- Sponsors:** Jalali
- Waive VB fee for 90 days (to March 1, 2025) and allow permits to be pulled.*
- Referred to the City Council due back on 1/22/2025**
- 23 RLH VBR 25-2** Appeal of Chang Hua Wang to a Vacant Building Registration Requirement at 1484 CHARLES AVENUE.
- Sponsors:** Jalali
- Deny the appeal. Property to remain a Cat 2 VB and require CCI.*
- Referred to the City Council due back on 1/22/2025**
- 24 RLH VBR 25-1** Appeal of Chang Hua Wang to a Vacant Building Registration Requirement at 1649 EDMUND AVENUE.
- Sponsors:** Jalali
- Deny the appeal. Property to remain a Cat 2 VB and require CCI.*
- Referred to the City Council due back on 1/22/2025**
- 25 RLH VBR 25-3** Appeal of Zach Kirchoff, Ireland Homes, to a Vacant Building Registration Renewal Notice at 1650 SHERBURNE AVENUE.
- Sponsors:** Jalali
- Waive the VB fee for 90 days (to April 4, 2025).*
- Referred to the City Council due back on 1/22/2025**
- 26 [RLH VBR 25-4](#)** Appeal of Ozzy Zachran, O.I.G. Holdings, to a Vacant Building Registration Notice at 383 TORONTO STREET.
- Sponsors:** Noecker
- Layover to LH February 18, 2025 at 1 pm for further discussion after full Fire C of O inspection; waive VB fee for 90 days to March 4, 2025.*
- Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 2/18/2025**

1:30 p.m. Hearings

Orders To Vacate - Fire Certificate of Occupancy

- 27 **RLH VO 24-4** Appeal of Raj Mehta to a Correction Notice-Complaint Inspection (which includes condemnation) at 220 ROBERT STREET SOUTH. (Refer to January 7, 2025 Legislative Hearing)

Sponsors: Noecker

Grant the appeal as conditions outlined in prior resolution were met.

Referred to the City Council due back on 1/22/2025

- 28 [RLH VO 24-33](#) Appeal of Jerry A. Brashier to a Revocation of Fire Certificate of Occupancy and Order to Vacate at 511 MINNEHAHA AVENUE EAST. (Refer to January 7, 2025 Legislative Hearing)

Sponsors: Noecker

Layover to LH January 21, 2025 at 1:30 p.m. for further discussion after review of engineering analysis by City engineer.

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 1/21/2025

2:00 p.m. Hearings**Fire Certificates of Occupancy**

- 29 [RLH FCO 25-1](#) Appeal of Casandra and Patrick Bradley to a Correction Notice-Complaint Inspection at 365 BATES AVENUE.

Sponsors: Johnson

Layover to LH February 4, 2025 at 2 pm for further discussion.

Laid Over to the Legislative Hearings due back on 2/4/2025