Mai Vang

From: tom Fendt <lifeisgoodfella@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 1, 2025 12:26 PM
To: Racquel Naylor
Cc: *CI-StPaul_LegislativeHearings
Subject: Re: 525 Jessamine Avenue East, Thomas Fendt, 612-842-9073

Here is my statement, please let me know if further information is needed.

My name is Thomas Fendt and I live at 525 Jessamine Ave East in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Over the summer I got a letter asking me to cut down weeds and cut back some brush from the sidewalk. Over the course of a week while the baby was napping I did just that, pulling weeds, trimming bushes, and cutting back or moving plants that were interfering with the sidewalk. Unfortunately I did not think to take pictures of my efforts.

I was surprised, and frankly enraged, when I later saw that someone else had come through with a mower and chainsaw. Along with milkweed, germanium, bleeding hearts, tulips, and irises, I seeded my boulevard area with native wildflowers, so I understand that it likely did not look like most lawns do. Many of my flowers were completely destroyed, and more damaged. My evergreen bushes were cut back, but so little regard was shown that the person wielding the chainsaw also cut a piece off of the red lid of my compost bin which had blown into the bushes in a recent storm. They also cut down an entire tree that had been on the property since before we lived there. Fortunately for me, the tree was an invasive buckthorn which I had been meaning to remove anyway, and this turned out to be an unexpected silver lining. If it had been any other tree on my property, or if like my neighbors I liked this type of tree, this would have been the crowning act in a series of disrespectful and destructive actions towards my property.

I put in a good faith effort to clear the sidewalk area. I did what I thought was necessary to create a safe and clear walking path based on available guidelines. If there was more to do, I would have done so. I am not a specialist in lawn care or topiary, and it's possible someone with a professional eye could have found fault with my work. I don't think that's what happened in this case. If the person wielding the chainsaw didn't take the time to notice the large red piece of plastic amongst my bushes, I have my doubts about whether they took the time to check if work had been done to clear the sidewalk before they just started cutting.

I do not believe that I should pay any amount of this $566.50 fine. I had already done the work necessary to clear plants away from the sidewalk. If the city deemed that the work I had done was not to a satisfactory level, I had shown through my actions that I was willing and able to make the changes required without outside intervention. The outside intervention that occurred caused damage, some of it permanent, to my property. This damage, while low in monetary value, demonstrated a lack of care and a lack of respect. I would welcome further guidance from the city about where my plants need to be in relation to the sidewalk to avoid further possibility of fines.

On Tue, Dec 17, 2024 at 7:36 AM Racquel Naylor <racquel.naylor@ci.stpaul.mn.us> wrote:

> Mr. Thomas Fendt,
>
> Per our conversation, your Legislative Hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, January 7, 2025.

I will tell the Legislative Hearing Officer that you will not be able to attend this hearing and that you would prefer to have an e-mail read in lieu of you attending. Please send your e-mail to the Legislative Hearing e-mail address.

If you change your mind or have someone that can attend on your behalf, please contact us. As I explained, most of the assessment hearings are held via teleconference. You will be given a 2-hour window.

Have a good day.

Racquel Naylor

Legislative Hearings

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