Mai Vang

From: *CI-StPaul_LegislativeHearings
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2024 11:01 AM
To: 'Williams, Jeannie'; *CI-StPaul_LegislativeHearings
Subject: RE: Public Hearing Notice: Assessment 258515
Attachments: 583 Burgess St.SAO 7-12-24.pdf; 583 Burgess St.Photos 7-12-24.pdf; 583 Burgess St.Photo 7-19-24.pdf; 583 Burgess St.Contractor Photos 8-8-24.pdf; 8-8-2024 Warners Invoice.pdf

Hello Ms. Williams,

I have rescheduled your appeal to be heard on **Thursday, January 9, 2025 via teleconference call between 9am-noon**. See attachments for the hearing.

Any questions, please let me know. Thanks,

Mai Vang
(She, her)
Legislative Hearing Coordinator | St Paul City Council
M: (651) 266-8585 ; D: (651) 266-8563
310 City Hall, 15 W. Kellogg Blvd, St Paul, MN 55102
SAINT PAUL MINNESOTA

From: Williams, Jeannie <Jeannie.Williams@co.ramsey.mn.us>
Sent: Friday, December 6, 2024 12:15 PM
To: *CI-StPaul_LegislativeHearings <LegislativeHearings@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: RE: Public Hearing Notice: Assessment 258515

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Joanna,

Thank you for your quick reply. I would like to move forward with the appeal. I can be reached at 612-986-6216.

Jeannie Williams
(She, her, hers)
Assistant to Director Sophia Thompson
Social Services | *Health and Wellness*
651-266-4416
160 E. Kellogg Blvd. , Saint Paul, MN 55101

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From: *CI-StPaul_LegislativeHearings <LegislativeHearings@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Sent: Friday, December 6, 2024 11:47 AM
To: Williams, Jeannie <Jeannie.Williams@co.ramsey.mn.us>
Subject: RE: Public Hearing Notice: Assessment 258515

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Good morning,

You should have received the assessment notice for this Summary Abatement Order, we'd be happy to put together a file to appeal this and you can speak to the Legislative Hearing officer about the matter. Your items below will be included in your file.

This is scheduled for Legislative Hearing Tuesday, December 17, 2024 between 10 am and 12 pm. This is a simple phone call (no zoom or video). If you wish to appeal, please confirm the best number to reach you that morning (or the number of who you would like to attend), and we'll send you a packet and confirmation once your appeal is entered.

Thank you,
Joanna

SAINT PAUL
MINNESOTA

Joanna Zimny
Legislative Hearing Executive Assistant
Legislative Hearing Office
Pronouns: she/her/hers
Saint Paul City Hall
Suite 310
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102
P: 651-266-8585
www.StPaul.gov
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From: Williams, Jeannie <Jeannie.Williams@co.ramsey.mn.us>
Sent: Friday, December 6, 2024 8:18 AM
To: *CI-StPaul_LegislativeHearings <LegislativeHearings@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: #CI-StPaul_Ward5 <Ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Public Hearing Notice: Assessment 258515

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Good morning,

I would formally like to object to the assessment.

I currently have an active claim filed (Claim C240189) with the City of Saint Paul regarding the initial abatement (24-057918) which was dated 7/12/24 with an order of compliance date of 7/19/24. This notice was received by us via mail on 7/15/24, giving us **4 days to complete the work** in question which was to:

1. Cut and remove any overgrown vegetation (including trees) impeding the public right of way, sidewalk blvd, and alley areas. Public Sidewalks must be cleared edge to edge and up to seven feet in height. Alleys and streets must be cleared from edge to edge and up to 14 feet in height.
   "PLEASE CUT, REMOVE, AND PROPERLY DISPOSE OF THE PLANT GROWTH AND VEGETATION INLUDING BRANCHES THAT ARE HANGING OVER THE ALLEY AND PUBLIC STREET RIGHT OF WAY TO A HEIGHT OF FOURTEEN FEET. THANK YOU."

With a photo of the alley. (per the abatement order)

Once we received the letter we promptly (as we had **4 DAYS to comply** to have a large tree in the alley trimmed near powerlines) took care of the area in question, trimmed up the tree to code and removed all vegetation along the alley that belonged to us. That should have been the end of it as the abatement notice states: "If violations are not corrected by the compliance date, the city's costs will be assessed to the property taxes of the related property." Being that the area was taken care of we believed no further action was needed.

August 12, we returned home from our wedding to find that the landscaping in front of our home **(583 Front landscaping… image attached),** behind our fence on private property had all been chopped down at the fence. All the vines that had been along our fence had been removed as well. The bushes and vines were not impeding the public right of way in any way. They were providing privacy and shade to our home and had been mature ornamental bushes that had been on the property for decades.

> I have camera footage that shows the subcontracted company, Warner's, on August 10, did no work in the area that the city very specifically requested the work be done.
> *"PLEASE CUT, REMOVE, AND PROPERLY DISPOSE OF THE PLANT GROWTH AND VEGETATION INLUDING BRANCHES THAT ARE HANGING OVER THE ALLEY AND PUBLIC STREET RIGHT OF WAY TO A HEIGHT OF FOURTEEN FEET. THANK YOU."*
> Instead, they spent an hour ripping the vines off my fence and chopping down bushes and ornamental trees that arched towards my house – not impeding public right of way in any way. The files are large and can be sent upon request.

When I called the City in August to ask about what happened to the front of the house, David Smith refused to listen or respond to any of my questions. He repeatedly to told me to call assessing. When I asked about the work order and tried to explain the work that was done was not in the alley but the front of my house behind my fence, he continued to tell me, he wasn't the correct contact and to call assessing. I asked who submitted the work order and his response was to call assessing.

I called assessing and spoke to Raquel Naylor who advised me to file a claim as clearly was a mistake that was made. She also informed me that David Smith was the correct contact and she didn't understand why he would send me to her without a letter of assessment.

1. 4 days to comply by hiring a tree company – where a tree is near powerlines is an unreasonable deadline – we managed to get it done ourselves which probably wasn't the safest option.
   a. These notices should be sent out with ample time for residents to complete the work (1 month – a minimum of 2 weeks) – providing a couple of days to remedy large tree trimming near power lines is a

very inequitable demand. It sets up residents living in a diverse neighborhood to fall into more dept within their properties in an area where incomes are lower.

2. Warner's, the subcontracted company did not complete work in the area that was specifically mentioned in the abatement (1 hour of camera footage can be provided).
    a. The woman I spoke with at Warner's said they must have "interpreted the work order wrong" and that they'd look into it. I was never followed up with.
3. If the City had requested, I trim another area, I would have remedied that area as well, but the area in question, illustrated in the photograph and outlined in bold print on the abatement clearly illustrated what we needed to take care of.
4. If minor overgrowth near sidewalks were in question in our area, the entire neighborhood has overgrowth that overhangs the sidewalks.
    a. Two houses down there is pine tree that completely overhangs the sidewalk leaving about 4 feet of space to duck under when walking on the sidewalk **(images attached)**
    b. 585 Burgess has raspberry bushes that overhang the sidewalk more than the vines attached to my chain link fence (which sits about 8-10 inches back from a retaining wall – so it would seem our property would be singled out if sidewalks were being cleared in the area.
5. I was told this claim "May take up to 6-8 weeks to complete". I filed the claim August 13 and have supporting documentation to prove a claim was filed. It's been 16 weeks at this point, and I received a letter dated November 8 stating the investigation has begun (letter attached).
6. The abatement order states "The rate will be approximately $260/hr. plus expenses. I have camera footage showing that Warner's was at 583 Burgess doing work in the front of the house (not the alley) for 1 hour. The summary for abatement is $402 plus expenses. There seems to be a discrepancy there or a need for further transparency on charges.

This has been a stressful and drawn-out process with the City of Saint Paul, leaving me with major concerns for my community. Not all the folks in my neighborhood are able to drop everything, stay home from work and handle something like this in a couple days avoid hefty fines and assessments.
We need to ensure we're providing equitable services to all our residents. That begins with proper lead times with communications, notices sent with enough time for busy, working-class homeowners to make arrangements to remedy any violations and it extends not focusing on one home within a neighborhood of "violations to target and city staff accepting accountability for mistakes.

I would like to point out that Raquel Naylor was very helpful, provided a listening ear, explained the process and advised on how to proceed being that the work was done in error. Her job can't be easy, regardless she provided exceptional service, showed kindness and empathy.

Additional photos and security footage can be available if needed.

Thank you for your time.

With respect for the work you do,

Jeannie Williams
(She, her, hers)
Assistant to Director Sophia Thompson
Social Services | *Health and Wellness*
651-266-4416
160 E. Kellogg Blvd. , Saint Paul, MN 55101

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