

From: [Heather Linehan](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul CC-Ward5](#); [*CI-StPaul LegislativeHearings](#); [Richard Kedrowski](#)
Subject: 973 Front Avenue - Amber Duncan
Date: Friday, December 27, 2024 9:03:19 AM

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Hello, good morning.

I am neighbors with Amber Duncan. I, along with many other neighbors, have been reporting her property for years (in addition to calling Animal Control and SPPD as we see and hear things).

We are really trying to understand this whole condemnation/order to vacate process and we're hoping that someone can provide an update to us.

The main question being: what is happening at the January 7 legislative hearing? If we're understanding it, Amber is to vacate on January 7. However, does it come down to Council making that decision based on DSI recommendations?

Should Amber be ordered to vacate, what measures are taken to prevent her from entering the property? As you'll read below, the first time she was ordered to vacate, that did not happen.

We've been able to piece together what's been happening so far, per the documents listed on the City Council Agenda website.

On December 10 a placard was placed on Amber's door - Notice of Condemnation as Unfit for Human Habitation/Order to Vacate - and she was ordered to vacate December 11.

On December 12 Amber submitted her application to appeal the Notice to Vacate and a hearing took place on that appeal

On December 13, Marcia Moermond sent a Determination on the Appeal in which:

- Furnace needed to be repaired or replaced by noon, or Amber needed to provide documentation that a furnace contractor would be doing the work within 24 hours.
- Amber to vacate the property no later than 5pm
- Amber allowed access to the house from 8am to 5pm for purposes of cleaning, repairing, retrieving personal information, etc. No sleeping in the home and no minors are to be present.
- No leaving the home with pets remaining.

* Furnace was not repaired until December 15 which we observed when we noticed smoke coming out of the chimney; Amber did not vacate the property; and her pets remained.

City contractors cleaned up Amber's yard and the mountain of trash in her driveway on December 16.

After that happened, a neighbor and I spoke with Officer Phan who was on site. He indicated to us that Amber was only allowed to be in the home from 8am to 5pm for the purpose of cleaning and doing other things to get her house in a habitable state. He further indicated to us that if we see her and the kids over there after 5pm, that we were to call the police.

Amber was over there after 5pm so we proceeded to call the police many times that night. Instead of parking in her usual spot -- in her driveway behind the house -- Amber parked her van on Chatsworth Street. For us, it was obvious she was "hiding" (in plain sight) her vehicle to give the appearance she had vacated the house.

Amber left the home around 7pm, returning at 8:30pm. We observed Amber and three teens return back to the home, with the van parked on Chatsworth.

Amber remained in the home for the rest of the night, but we saw three teens living in the home leave Amber's house and walk to the van parked on Chatsworth. They left around 9pm.

Police showed up shortly after 9pm. Amber didn't answer the door. The last squad car left around 9:30pm and Amber's van is seen driving through the alley and parking on Chatsworth around 9:45pm. The three teens who left around 9pm returned back to the home and her van remained on Chatsworth overnight.

On December 17, I emailed Officer Phan to let him know that Amber had been in the home overnight. He indicated that he needed video proof of her entering the home -- that simply taking photos of her van parked on Chatsworth or providing video from my garage camera of her parking her van on Chatsworth, getting out of her van and then walking back to her house, was not enough.

On December 18, the neighbor next door to Amber installed a camera on their home which shows Amber's side door.

Also on December 18, Tara Smith, Amber's sister, sent an email to Marsha Moermond in which she expressed her ongoing concerns regarding the overall cleanliness of the home. She indicated considerable cleaning had been done, but that she did not believe the residence was suitable for habitation.

Tara suggested the following to happen:

- Placing a dumpster in front of the house (A large roll-off was actually already in place as it appeared in front of the home on December 16 or 17)
- Limiting the residency of individuals in the home to those listed on the energy assistance application to maintain better oversight. (There continues to be so many people living in the home to this day)
- Coordinating with animal control to remove animals currently in the home. The animals require veterinary care, which Amber cannot afford. (We wholeheartedly agree with this. With the help of a neighbor's camera, which faces Amber's yard, we have observed the dogs rarely out in the yard, if ever, on some days.

One recent example, dogs have not been seen in the yard since at least December 23. We know they're inside the house because they bark every time someone enters the house. After seeing photos that DSI took of the condition inside the home, it's safe to assume the dogs are urinating and defecating inside the house because they are not being let outside. There's at least two or more cats inside as well).

- A provision that prohibits Amber from owning pets while residing at the property. (Absolutely yes to this. She's a hoarder -- a hoarder of things, of animals, of children).

On December 19, with the camera finally in place, I was able to send video of Amber entering her home on December 18 around 10:30pm to Officer Phan. Officer Phan replied back that he

was out of the office until Monday, December 23, and would not be able to look into any updated court orders until then.

*At this point last week -- prior to me finding the hearing minutes and accompanying attachments of correspondence on the City Council agendas website -- we were all left wondering what was going on and specifically why was Amber allowed to be in the home without any restrictions.

On December 20 Marcia Moermond sent a second Determination on the Appeal to Amber in which:

- Appeal of the condemnation and order to vacate is still an open and undecided case in front of the City Council.
- Enforcement of the Order to Vacate is stayed pending the Council's decision on the matter. They referred it back to Legislative Hearing and that a work plan will need to be developed and approved to address the remaining items.
- Amber was allowed to remove the emergency abatement order posted to her door on December 13, as the clean-up was executed by city contractors on December 16.
- Order to vacate placard could be removed.
- DSI issued a second Order to Vacate with a vacate date of January 7, 2025.
- Second Order to Vacate placard may be removed pending the January 7, 2025, Legislative Hearing.
- Strongly encouraged Amber to use the dumpster provided by the House Calls Program. (Amber's daughter was seen throwing a dresser into the dumpster on December 21. That was the only thing seen being disposed of from the time it showed up to when it was picked up and removed. There was, however, a random pickup truck that pulled in front of the dumpster on December 22 and the people inside the truck proceeded to throw all their junk into the dumpster. We think this pickup truck saw the empty dumpster and seized the opportunity to dispose of their junk and pulled away.)
- Follow up with them about whether there are deadlines for when they need to pick up the dumpster. (The dumpster was picked up on December 24)
- Amber is to provide access to a Code Enforcement inspector on 2 occasions, first on either December 27 or December 30; and a second inspection on January 6, 2025.

The condemnation and order to vacate the house is a great first step in the right direction. However, this goes so far beyond Amber's hoarding issues and having an unsafe and filthy house.

At any point will Child Protective Services be brought into this? Because they should, if they are not already. There are additional major issues over there:

1. Amber letting the kids get high. Amber and the kids sit in her van for hours at a time, smoking weed. We see it. We smell it. We hear them coughing and hacking. We hear the kids' slurred, slowed down speech. We see the flicker of lighters in the back seats and blunts being passed around the van. We see and hear their wild behavior (as recently as December 25, some of the kids climbed out of an upstairs window and were seen on the roof, hanging out, dancing and videoing each other. Amber was not home at the time).

We see Amber with a blunt hanging out of her mouth as she drives around, obviously impaired. We have called the police on this many, many times but either the police show up

too late (they go back into the house or they leave before the police arrive), or the police do show up and Amber explains it away.

There's no doubt in anybody's mind that Amber being high all day/every day contributes to her poor judgment, low energy to maintain her home, and having no other priorities other than to get high.

2. The kids aren't in school. Understanding that now kids are on winter break and don't have school at the moment, but they haven't been in school in months. Her youngest, John, used to be picked up by a school bus on Front Avenue. Daughter Lizzy and Nephew Johnny used to be seen walking up Chatsworth, presumably to catch a bus. Maybe all the kids are suspended. We don't know. What we do know is they are home during the day. Hopefully their schools are on top of this issue.

3. Is anyone questioning why Amber has all these kids in her home? Genuine question: where are their parents? Amber cannot manage to parent her own kids, let alone taking on that responsibility to care for somebody else's kids.

We don't think the number of people in that house, who are not Amber, her two kids, and nephew, should be any factor or consideration in this process. Amber is clearly playing into people's sympathies by saying things like "I know it is cold, but is it more important to put a family out on the streets in the middle of this? Or let them stay in the house with space heaters while they're trying to figure out how to fix the furnace." At this point, in our opinions, Amber should be focused only on herself, her two kids, and her nephew, who has lived with her since at least 2019. All the other friends, "boyfriend," his mom and 3 year old sister should not be there. Amber saying "we have a large family and we all fight a lot" as some sort of answer to why police calls happen is ridiculous. No, Amber does not have a large family. She does however have a lot of people living in her house that should not be there because it only results in more chaos.

Should it reach the point where Amber is truly ordered to vacate (and we think that should 100% happen and hope it's enforced), she has a sister and parents that she could stay with if it came to that. I doubt Amber has even allowed herself to think that far in advance to plan for that possibility -- a lot of that due to the fact she continues to get chance after chance to get her house in order. I can promise you, she will do the bare minimum, keep coming up with excuses, and continue to ask for extensions so long as they continue to be allowed/granted.

Her kids and the kids in the home are allowed to do whatever they want. There's no parental supervision over there. None. Amber's house is essentially the "fun house" where the kids can do whatever, be loud, run around the neighborhood at midnight, and smoke weed.

A month or so ago, a neighbor forgot to lock her car door. On that night, the kids were out running around and Amber's son and his friend went into the car and stole some things from the front seat. Despite that act being caught on camera, Amber denied knowing who the boys were. That's just one of many examples of her kids doing something like that and then Amber feigning ignorance of knowing them and how she "can't control what my kids' friends do!" -- despite one clearly being her son and his friend who's been living in Amber's house for many months now.

That's a major issue for us all. Amber has so many kids living over there that it's just a matter

of time before one or more of them do something criminally substantial and Amber simply denies she knows them.

4. While we have no physical proof, we have long suspected inappropriate sexual behavior happening inside the home, given the number of teens being allowed to stay overnight for long periods of time. This goes so beyond a normal sleepover with friends.

One example involves her so-called new boyfriend who is 18 years old (his mother and his 3 year old sister are also living in the home -- it worries us that there's that young of a child staying in the home with all the questionable behavior that's happening. The 3 year old doesn't even have a car seat/booster and sits on the lap of someone anytime she's in the van). He, along with another teen, showed up late in the spring/early summer of this year, with Amber claiming they were her nephews. At the time, and as recent as earlier this month, Amber had a boyfriend. They apparently broke up and now this 18 year old, who she claimed was her nephew -- who she took into her home -- is now her new boyfriend. Amber is 34.

I would also like to address where Amber claims she has a job. I don't believe she's being truthful about that. Rarely, if ever, do we see Amber alone driving in the van. Her van is always filled with kids and unless she has a job where she's taking the kids with her, we don't think she's employed. At least not in a traditional sense. That may be something to press Amber on, if that has any bearing in all of this.

If you were to ask me and other neighbors today what we would like to see happen: we'd like for Amber to move. Simple as that. We'd love for her parents and sister to say "enough is enough," to sell the house and be done with this already.

At the very least, Amber should absolutely be ordered to vacate the home. If she's ordered to vacate, that will force her to take all of this seriously because from our observation, she is not.

Amber has been an issue for over five years. This past year has been the absolute worst in the 8 or so years she's lived there -- and we fear things will just continue to get worse as the kids get older and bolder and Amber completely loses any sliver of control she may have with them.

We have all lived on this block between 15-40 years. We are all friends with/friendly with one another. Except for Amber, it's a pretty quiet neighborhood. Amber is a menace to this neighborhood.

Unless she gets some serious, deep rooted therapy, she's not going to change. She may have repairs done to the home or get a professional cleaning crew in to clean the home. But if *she* doesn't change, we'll be right back here in a year. She's so comfortable in her victimhood and quick to cast blame on others for her own poor choices, bad behavior, and outright neglect to kids and animals. Her saying that DSI has been "harassing" her for 5 years and how they "stole" things from her this summer is absolutely absurd.

We think Amber's been given so many opportunities to turn things around and she simply doesn't do anything to fix the problem. Her answer to problems is avoid and sit in her van smoking weed with children and teens. That's her day to day. Every single day. Not once have we seen her go into her packed, double car garage and start going through things to throw in the dumpster. Not once have we seen her carrying things out of her house to throw in the

dumpster. It's always her kids (and the random kids living there) or sister doing the heavy lifting. By her own admission, her mom pays for a lot of things. A lot of enabling of Amber happening in that family.

I appreciate you all taking the time to read this. I know it's A LOT. We just wanted to provide more context to you and have you aware that Amber's problems go so far beyond "just garbage and hoarding."

One final thing: Should this email be used as an attachment to the January 7 hearing, or any other public facing matter, I would ask that my name/email be redacted and not publicly shared. Amber is extremely volatile and retaliatory and I fear she would lash out in some fashion at me, or any other neighbor for that matter (or worse, rile up and encourage the kids to do something).