

**Board of Property and Maintenance Appeals Minutes
Board Meeting**

March 24, 2026



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CALL TO ORDER

Present	Excused
Engineer Brian Ball Nathan Overholt (OBO Health Commissioner Zach Green) Fire Chief Chad Christopher Russ Mentzer Kathryn Brechler Katie Delozier	Steve Jefferson

Others in attendance:
 City Law Director, P. Robert Broeren, City Inspector, Scott Zimmerman; City Clerk, Zac Sherman; Code Enforcement Officer, Brian Marvin; Mayor Matt Starr; City Auditor, Dan Brinkman; Councilman Mel Severns; Councilwoman Lenan Hager; Councilman Jay Mahan; Councilman Dale Miller
 Stacey Varner, Nets Bartin, Maureen Hall, Ross Wind, Gail ha Beure, Marcia Adams, Greg Yashnyk, Israel Schaaf

MINUTES APPROVAL

Board of Property Maintenance Appeals Minutes 12/04/2025

Christopher made a motion to approve the minutes from the 12/04/2025 Board of Property Maintenance Appeals. Brechler seconded. Approved by unanimous voice vote.

BZA FILES

106 E Lamartine St Condemnation Proposal BPMA 3/24/2026

Brian Marvin (sworn in) : reported there had been multiple issues over past year. The City cleaned the property once, resulting in a special assessment for the property owner. Last October a fire burned up part of the home. It has been 5 months since that incident. No damage mitigation has occurred during that time (such efforts typically begin within 30 days following an incident like this). Home owner’s insurance and company to do the work have been spoken to, and have reported that the property owner has not coordinated with them. The house is soaking wet. In the hot months, this will be a huge issue. The house is empty, and is not habitable. Marvin recommends Condemnation for Rehabilitation and that the board set a timeline to begin repairs.

Zimmerman (sworn in) : Reported he had been in contact with Ms. Fisher. She has contacted Engineering Dpt. numerous times. She owes the city \$3,000. Requested the board put a timeline on repairs so that the house is repaired before it is non-salvageable. A reasonable timeframe would be to start within 30 days and have a plan of action, with reports every 30 days. The longest length of time would be 180 days to get all repairs done. After the initial fire, the property was boarded up quickly. Since then, the property owner and her insurance cannot agree on how to proceed / cooperate.

Broeren : Reported that if repairs are not done after 180 days, the City will likely ask for a full condemnation. Within 90 days the repairs must be started and on route to completion. The board can set interim goals within that.

Marvin : Reported that if the timeline is approved and no progress is made, he can request a warrant. The City needs to immediately see mitigation regarding the wetness.

Broeren : Reported that this recommendation falls under section 1303.12 recommendation for condemnation and that the building

is being made safe by repairs.

Ball opened the floor to others to offer testimony.

Ross Wind (sworn in) : Wind is the Community Risk Reduction Inspector for the City. Reported he was in the building during the fire. With the water weight, he questions how safe the structure would be for people to even be in. If the house caught fire again, he would not send firefighters in. There is nothing worth salvaging within, at this point. He has been a firefighter for 15 years.

ROLL CALL VOTE	Motion: That the property be Condemned for Rehabilitation, with set points of removing the debris within 30 days, and commencing full restoration within 90 days.
RESULT:	Adopted [6 TO 0]
MOVER:	Fire Chief Chad Christopher
SECONDER:	Russ Mentzer
AYES:	Brian Ball, Nathan Overholt, Chad Christopher, Russ Mentzer, Kathryn Brechler, Katie Delozier
NAYS:	None

Parcels #66-05506.000, #66-03852.000, #66-03852.001 Condemnation Proposal BPMA
3/24/2026

Brian Marvin (sworn in) : The City acquired the properties in 2022. The buildings were in poor condition at that time, due to lack of proper maintenance. Acquired to tear down and replace with a municipal building. Windstorms knocked out brickwork, masonry, and façade. The wood is dry rotted. Brickwork is wedging loose. Water has been flowing into the basement for a long time. The ground beneath the foundation is eroding. Cinder blocks and shims under beams. Exposed and substandard wiring. Ancient wiring. Mildew, mold. This is as dangerous as any building I've been in; potentially, more so. Two of the buildings are built into each other; all are leaning against one another. If one comes down, they all must. If we have serious wind again, I'd be horrified to see what happens. Parcel 5506 was the primary inspection

Ross Wind (sworn in) : Parapet wall connecting buildings are leaning. There are cracks in them. There are windows skewed to almost a 45-degree angle. Façade on the front isn't even the bad brick. The red brick within is the structural wall. The white brick is aesthetic, but not adhered properly. Water is coming in between the two. The foundation is horrible.

Christopher : We are working on getting the current resident out. Once that happens, I will put a double red x on the building, which means the firefighters will not go in.

Mentzer : was there a home inspection in 2022?

Marvin : In the previous reports given by the city, we have noted the poor condition of these buildings. Scaffolding and netting is in place to catch falling pieces of the building. Recommendation: condemn and demolish.

Zimmerman (sworn in) : There were repairs made after purchasing the building to mitigate water flowing into the building. Recommendation: Condemned and demolished. Cannot be fixed.

Broeren : The city worked on the roof after acquiring the building to work on preventing water from coming in.

Matt Starr (sworn in) : Historical preservation matters, it connects us to who we are and the story of Mount Vernon. The buildings have deteriorated over decades and are no longer viable. Public safety issues. Not cosmetic, but structural issues. Windows have fallen from the building. We are one incident away from someone getting hurt. Paying for further inspections will not change the outcome, but delay the process, and expose the public to further risk. The time to restore the buildings was decades ago. We can preserve the spirit of Mayor Curtis in multiple creative ways. Blight must be addressed.

Mentzer : What would go in place of this building?

Mayor : I would have to confer with the Engineer, Law Director, and Councilman Severns.

Ball opened to the public for comments:

Stacey Varner (sworn in) : My understanding is that no one who has spoken is a structural engineer. What is the cost of tearing down and rebuilding vs. fixing the building? Shouldn't we have a recommendation and numbers from a structural engineer before we condemn the building? Would like to see detailed dollar amounts regarding all options for the building.

Ball : We have previous testimony from a company that does restoration every day, saying that it would cost double to restore than to tear down and replace.

Marcia Adams (sworn in) : I am very upset that we want to tear this down without getting more numbers. I am concerned that the city owning this and the board being city-run is a conflict of interest. Why aren't there more guidelines for historic preservation in our historic downtown? Could we have more routine inspections for buildings like these (historic buildings) to make sure they are structurally sound?

Ball : We do not have building codes, and perhaps should develop more building codes. We invested in a 3-dimensional scan and photo shoots for the building to preserve what it was. We are hoping that we can salvage pieces of the Curtis building and reuse in a commercially viable structure.

Brinkman (sworn in) : I have received no donation for the preservation or operation of these buildings.

Christopher : We do fire safety inspections. Not structural inspections. There are three categories in risk analysis: we will risk a lot to save a lot; risk little to save little; risk nothing for what is already lost. I want to note that I do appreciate restoring historic buildings and supporting it when it is possible. Seismic activity of even passing trucks could destabilize this building. Our fire inspection was not very good until 2011 and has ramped up since then.

Wind : For yearly inspections, we cannot enter residential dwellings without permission.

Varner : Sas there been any grant requests or local foundations made to address this building?

Ball : Yes. And the local foundations said no.

Saverns (sworn in) : I would not vote on spending any money to rehabilitate this building.

ROLL CALL VOTE	Motion to Motion: Condemn the subject properties for full demolition, giving 90 days to complete the demolition.
RESULT:	Adopted [6 TO 0]
MOVER:	Russ Mentzer
SECONDER:	Kathryn Brechler
AYES:	Brian Ball, Nathan Overholt, Chad Christopher, Russ Mentzer, Kathryn Brechler, Katie Delozier
NAYS:	None

Ball : If we give 90 days that lets us salvage pieces and components of the building before beginning the rough demolition. We need to relocate tenants.

Christopher : In the future, we need some sort of inspection for these buildings before things get this far.

Zimmerman : My department is working on a registry to allow us to do on-site inspections. We have zoning codes, not building codes.

Ball : City Council will need to approve before demolition can begin. Demolition typically happens over a weekend.

Broeren : The biggest issue is the asbestos abatement. A safety zone will need to be created on the roads when that occurs.

- a. For additional details, please see the [Agenda and Minutes](#) from the Historical Review Commission meeting on October 9, 2025.

ADJOURN

Delozier made a motion to adjourn. Brechler seconded. Adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

Letter of Opposition to Demolition of Curtis Building

I am unable to attend today's meeting due to medical issues but I would like to voice my opposition to the demolition of the buildings (i.e. 10 N Main St.; 6 E Chestnut; 18 N Main St) that are before the Board of Property Maintenance Appeals today.

I have spoken about my many concerns over the last three years not only at City Council, City Meetings and at the focus groups that occurred early last year concerning these buildings as well as in a meeting directly with the Mayor.

First and foremost, it is a conflict of interest due to these properties being owned by the City of Mount Vernon, purchased during our current Mayor's administration (I believe in 2022) and the Board of Property Maintenance Appeals that is deciding the matter is a Board whose members are selected by the Mayor. If it is the Property owner's responsibility to maintain the buildings, then the City is responsible for not having done so. It doesn't matter what previous owners did or didn't do, they are the current owners. Is this even legal?

Secondly, no efforts have been made by the City to have these buildings looked at by any experienced Historic Preservation entity to know exactly what could or can't be done to restore or save these buildings. Again, this is something I have suggested on more than one occasion to City officials.

Thirdly, I was informed that the needed reason for demolition was because the front facade of the Henry Curtis building had separated from the building due to damage from the wind storm. Much to my astonishment, there is scaffolding now in front of that building and the scaffolding appears to be attached to the facade so I'm left to wonder: If the facade has separated, wouldn't that be too dangerous to attach and put scaffolding in front of?

It appears that the City has failed to do maintenance on these buildings in the last 4 years since they took ownership and that they are using the windstorm damage to excuse their neglect so that they can take all three buildings down. Did the City intentionally allow the buildings to deteriorate so that the outcome was demolition? This further complicates the issue of conflict of interest.

This Board should not be making these determinations with obtaining outside restoration expertise as to whether restoration is still possible. This would help to address any existing conflict of interest with the City and also provide information the voting Public information as to what would be entailed/possible in the restoration of these buildings since they are in the Historic Downtown District.

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