

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

	Number:	25-354	Meeting:	September 29, 2025
	Agenda Item:	15	Roll Call:	25-1276
	Submitted by:	Chris Johansen, Neighborhood Services Department Director		

AGENDA HEADING:

Resolution authorizing release of special assessments for property located at 1315 12th Street.

SYNOPSIS:

Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity (Habitat) is requesting the City of Des Moines release special assessments against a vacant lot at 1315 12th Street. The property accrued \$33,118.85 in costs from the City due to public nuisance demolition and code enforcement. The nuisance has been abated, and Habitat secured the tax deed to the property. Releasing the special assessments against the property will clear the title and allow Habitat to build a new single-family home to sell to an income-qualified home buyer.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The request will abate \$33,118.85 in special assessments.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The special assessments were all incurred by the previous owner. The prior owner is deceased and was previously unresponsive to addressing the issues, paying the fines or taxes or throughout the tax sale process. The listed special assessments are not removed through the tax sale process as they were issued after the taxes were sold and certificate issued.
- The prior owner (Virginia Johnson) had suspended taxes and special assessments amounting to \$20,039.69 that were due upon her passing. They were sold at tax sale in June 2022. A private tax sale certificate buyer purchased the tax sale certificate on this property.
- In November 2022, a default decree for the public nuisance case of 1315 12th Street was entered. The City demolished the property in 2023. Costs of the public nuisance abatement were assessed to the property and there were other special assessments related to the property totaling \$33,118.85 in special assessments and interest.
- The private tax sale buyer reached out to Habitat just before the certificate expired. The private tax sale buyer donated their certificate (assigned it for no payment) and Habitat processed the certificate to the tax sale deed in June 2025.

- Habitat is working with Polk County to also acquire and build on the adjacent lot.
- Because the costs are assessed to the property, Council action is required for the Treasurer to process the release.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: May 9, 2022

Roll Call Number: [22-0713](#)

Action: Abatement of public nuisances as follows:

- (G) [1315](#) 12th Street. Moved by Boesen to adopt. Second by Gatto. Motion Carried 6-1.
Absent: Cownie.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE

For more information on this and other agenda items, please call the City Clerk's Office at 515-283-4209 or visit the Clerk's Office on the first floor of City Hall, 400 Robert D Ray Drive. Council agendas are available to the public at the City Clerk's Office on Thursday afternoon preceding Monday's Council meeting. Citizens can also request to receive meeting notices and agendas by email by calling the Clerk's Office or sending their request via email to cityclerk@dmgov.org.