



May 04, 2026

Neighborhood Planning and Development Committee
414 East 12th Street, Kansas City, MO 64106

Supplemental Copy to City Clerk
Courtesy Copy to Diane Binckley, Assistant City Manager
Courtesy Copy to Crispin Rea, 4th District At-Large

Dear NPDC and Councilmembers,

The Volker Neighborhood Association supports all three proposed ordinances addressing demolition by neglect.

Throughout our neighborhood, homes sit boarded up and deteriorating. Storefronts along the W. 39th Street and 43rd Street corridors have been vacant for years, left in place by landlords with no apparent intention to maintain or improve them. This neglect is not a Volker problem alone. It runs citywide, and Midtown carries more than its share. Neglected properties signal to prospective businesses that investment here carries risk. They signal to prospective homeowners that this may not be a place to put down roots. The damage compounds over time and it falls on the surrounding community to absorb it.

Ordinance Nos. 260399, 260400, and 260401 address the conditions that allow this pattern to continue. Neglect has functioned as a strategy in this city for too long. Minimum stabilization standards mean owners can no longer let a building quietly fall apart and call it someone else's problem. Historic preservation review before demolition means a "dangerous" designation cannot be used as a shortcut around accountability. Vacant property registration and fees mean that sitting on neglected land has a real cost, and that the City has a mechanism to move property toward owners who will actually use it.

What is lost in this process is not abstract. Kansas City's historic building stock is irreplaceable. When a neglected structure is demolished, the architecture, the craftsmanship, and the history embedded in that building are gone permanently. No incentive package and no new construction brings it back. At the same time, many of the properties being lost are not just historic, they are or were homes. Occupied residential structures are acquired, allowed to deteriorate, and torn down, removing affordable housing from the market without replacing it. The people who lived there are displaced. The lots sit. And the surrounding neighborhood absorbs the cost in depressed property values, reduced tax base, and the slow erosion of the conditions that make a place worth investing in.

These ordinances begin to hold owners responsible for what they choose to do, and choose not to do, with the properties they acquire. The Volker Neighborhood Association strongly urges your Committee and the full City Council to support all three.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Amanda Butler

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