

1 **BOARD BILL NO. 322 INTRODUCED BY ALDERWOMAN KACIE STARR**
2 **TRIPLETT**
3

4 An ordinance pertaining to a registration fee for certain buildings and structures, repealing
5 Ordinance 64678, and enacting a new ordinance requiring establishing semiannual registration
6 fee of two hundred dollars to be charged to the owner of any parcel of residential property
7 improved by a residential structure, or commercial property improved by a structure containing
8 multiple dwelling units, which is vacant and has been vacant for at least six months, and which is
9 in violation of the building code of the City of St. Louis; authorizing the Building Commissioner
10 to inspect properties which may be subject to such fee and to make the determination as to which
11 properties shall be assessed the fee; authorizing the Building Commissioner to establish a
12 procedure for the collection of the fee; permitting the owner of such property to appeal the
13 determination of the Building Commissioner as to the assessment of the fee; permitting any
14 delinquent fees to be collected in the same manner as delinquent real property taxes; and
15 permitting the fee to be waived if the property is subsequently sold to a bona fide purchaser;
16 establishing a Vacant Building Online Database; requiring vacant building maintenance;
17 establishing a Vacant Building Initiative Fund; containing a penalty clause, severability clause
18 and emergency clause.

19 **BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS AS FOLLOWS:**

20 **SECTION ONE.** Ordinance 64678 is hereby repealed and enacted in lieu thereof is the
21 following:

22 **SECTION TWO.** There is hereby established a semiannual registration fee of two hundred
23 dollars (\$200.00) which shall be charged to the owner of any parcel of residential property
24 improved by a residential structure, or commercial property improved by a structure containing

1 multiple dwelling units, which is vacant and has been vacant for at least six months, and which is
2 in violation of the Building Code of the City of St. Louis. Any property subject to a specific
3 redevelopment agreement with the City of St. Louis and its development agencies shall be
4 exempt from this ordinance.

5 **SECTION THREE.** The Building Commissioner or his designee or a Neighborhood
6 Stabilization Officer shall inspect any property that may be subject to such registration fee. The
7 inspecting officer shall report his findings and recommendations and the Building Commissioner
8 or his designee shall determine whether any such property shall be subject to the registration fee.
9 Within five business days of such determination, the Building Commissioner or his designee
10 shall notify by mail the owners of property on which the registration fee has been levied at their
11 last known address according to the records of the office of the Assessor. The property owner
12 shall have the right to appeal the decision of the Building Commissioner to the municipal court
13 within thirty days of such notification. Absent the existence of any valid appeal or request for
14 reconsideration pursuant to Section Four of this ordinance, the registration fee shall begin to
15 accrue on the beginning of the second calendar quarter after the decision of the Building
16 Commissioner.

17 **SECTION FOUR.** Within thirty days of the Building Commissioner making such notification,
18 the property owner may complete any improvements to the property that may be necessary to
19 revoke the levy of the registration fee and then may request a reinspection of the property and a
20 reconsideration of the levy of the registration fee by the city. If the Building Commissioner or his
21 designee revoke the registration fee, no such assessment shall be made and the matter shall be
22 considered closed. If the Building Commissioner or his designee affirm the assessment of the
23 registration fee, the property owner shall have the right to appeal the reconsideration decision of

1 the Building Commissioner to the municipal court within thirty days of such decision. Absent the
2 existence of any valid appeal to the municipal court or other court of competent jurisdiction, the
3 registration fee shall begin to accrue on the beginning of the second calendar quarter after the
4 reconsideration decision of the Building Commissioner.

5 **SECTION FIVE.** The Building Commissioner is hereby authorized to establish procedures for
6 the payment of the registration fee and penalties for delinquent payments of such fees. Any
7 registration fees which are delinquent for a period of one year shall become a lien on the
8 property and shall be subject to foreclosure proceedings in the same manner as delinquent real
9 property taxes. The owner of the property against which the assessment was originally made
10 shall be able to redeem only by presenting evidence that the violations of the applicable housing
11 code cited by the Building Commissioner have been cured and presenting payment of all
12 registration fees and penalties. Upon bona fide sale of the property to an unrelated party said lien
13 shall be considered released and the delinquent registration fee forgiven.

14 **SECTION SIX.** The St. Louis Vacant Building Online Database shall be available online for
15 public access. The property owner shall provide the property owner's street address, phone
16 number and email address. The database shall include the property owner's name, the property
17 owner's street address, phone number and email address. The Building Division shall be
18 responsible for the creation, implementation and maintenance of the online database. All vacant
19 buildings owned by the City of St. Louis and/or the Land Reutilization Authority (LRA) shall be
20 listed on the online database.

21 **SECTION SEVEN. Vacant Building Maintenance**

1 A. The owner of any building that has become vacant, and any person maintaining,
2 operating or collecting rent for any building that has been determined vacant shall, within thirty
3 (30) days, do the following:

4 1. Enclose and secure the building, as defined under the St. Louis City Revised Code
5 Chapter 25.01.030, Section 118.3.1. All doors must be properly secured and windows on all
6 floors of the building shall be properly secured;

7 2. Maintain the building in a secure and closed condition until the building is again
8 occupied or until repair or completion of the building has been undertaken.

9 **SECTION EIGHT. Collected Funds**

10 The Comptroller of the City of St. Louis is hereby authorized and directed to establish a
11 Special Account to be known as the Vacant Building Initiative Fund in which all funds received
12 pursuant to this ordinance shall be deposited and such funds shall be kept separate and apart from
13 all other funds. Such funds are hereby appropriated for the costs associated with this ordinance.
14 All interest generated on deposited funds shall be accrued to the Vacant Building Initiative Fund
15 Account.

16 **SECTION NINE. Penalty Clause**

17 If an owner fails to pay the registration fee under Section Two of this ordinance thirty (30) days
18 after the registration fee is assessed, a penalty shall be assessed of two hundred- fifty dollars
19 (\$250.00) per occurrence. Any person found to be in violation of provisions of Section Six of
20 this ordinance shall be subject to a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or to a
21 term of imprisonment of not more than ninety days (90) or to both a fine and imprisonment. Any
22 person found to be in violation of provisions of Section Seven of this ordinance shall be subject
23 to a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or to a term of imprisonment of not

1 more than ninety days (90) or to both a fine and imprisonment. Every day that a violation
2 continues shall constitute a separate and distinct offense.

3 **SECTION TEN.** Severability Clause

4 If any provision, clause, sentence, paragraph or word of this ordinance or the application thereof
5 to any person, entity or circumstances shall be held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the
6 other provisions of this ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provisions or
7 application, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are declared severable.

8 **SECTION ELEVEN.** Emergency Clause.

9 The passage of this ordinance being deemed necessary for the preservation of the public peace,
10 health and safety, it is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall become effective
11 immediately upon its passage and approval by the mayor.