

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF HENNEPIN

DISTRICT COURT
FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**In Re: Hearings to Reduce the Redemption
Period Following Tax Judgment Sale for
Certain Abandoned Properties**

**STANDING ORDER OF
REFERENCE**

WHEREAS, Minn. Stat. §§281.173 and 281.174 allow District Court proceedings to be brought to reduce the redemption period to 5 weeks for certain abandoned properties following a tax judgment sale, but before a notice of expiration of the time for redemption has been given; and

WHEREAS, these proceedings require an analysis of the Torrens and Abstract real estate records to determine whether the proper parties have been served to confer jurisdiction to enter an order; and

WHEREAS, the Hennepin County Examiner of Titles and Deputy Examiners of Titles are knowledgeable about title matters and have ready access to the Hennepin County real estate records and are competent to handle hearings for these proceedings; and

WHEREAS, the Hennepin County Examiner of Titles and Deputies are appointed by the District Court Bench, are compensated by Hennepin County and perform statutory duties that include court matters pursuant to Minnesota law, Chapters 508 and 508A; and

WHEREAS, the great majority of these proceedings will be uncontested; and

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

1. All Complaints filed pursuant to Minn. Stat. §§281.173 and 281.174 to reduce the

redemption period to 5 weeks shall be filed as civil cases with Hennepin County District Court.

2. These cases shall be referred to the Examiner of Titles as the Hearing Officer pursuant to Minn. R. Civ. P. 53, to review the evidence and hear the parties and submit to this Court recommended Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Orders. The Examiner of Titles may assign the case to a Deputy Examiner. All further references herein to the Examiner mean the Examiner or a Deputy Examiner.
3. Absent good cause, hearings on these complaints shall be held weekly.
4. At least three days before the hearing, all Affidavits of Service, documentary evidence, and a proposed Order shall be filed with the Court, or the proposed Order may be emailed to the Examiner of Titles office.
5. If a defendant appears and contests the entry of an Order reducing the redemption period, Court Administration shall dismiss the action at the request of plaintiff, and close the case. If, at the hearing, plaintiff does not ask to dismiss the action, the case shall be assigned to a judge for all further proceedings. Pursuant to this Standing Order, the Examiner shall instruct the appearing defendant(s) to serve and file an Answer within 7 days, or longer at the discretion of the Examiner. No oral testimony or other evidence shall be taken at the initial hearing before the Examiner to decide a disputed case.
6. For matters that are uncontested, if the Examiner is satisfied after reviewing the evidence that the Court has jurisdiction over all necessary parties and that plaintiff has proven the allegations of the Complaint, the Examiner shall issue a recommended order after hearing. This order shall be presented by plaintiff to the District Court signing judge.

7. In any case that is uncontested, if the Examiner finds that the legal requirements have not been met, the Examiner may continue the matter to permit plaintiff to file additional evidence or a proposed order, or to serve additional parties with an Amended Summons.
8. In any case that is uncontested, if the Examiner determines that the court lacks jurisdiction over the necessary parties or the filed evidence is insufficient to support entry of the requested order, the Examiner shall file a Report with the Court stating the reasons the entry of the order is not recommended. Court Administration shall serve the Report on the parties. If plaintiff wishes to have the decision reviewed, plaintiff may file a Request for Review and Judge Assignment no later than 10 days after service of the Report. Court Administration shall process this request like a Request for Review of the findings of a statutory Referee. The standard of review shall be the standard in Minn. R. Civ. P. 53.07. Court Administration shall close the case if no Request for Review is timely filed.
9. The Examiner of Titles shall publish instructions for 5 Week Cases, outlining the process and requirements and informing the public of this Order, on the County website.
10. The standing order entitled "Order of Reference" dated May 1996 relating to cases filed under Minn. Stat. §§281.173 and 281.174 is rescinded upon the signing of this Order.

11. This standing order is effective when signed and shall remain in effect until further order of the Court.

Dated: March 21, 2017

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ivy S. Bernhardson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Ivy S. Bernhardson
Chief Judge of District Court