**St. Paul City Councilmembers**

By email

**Billy's on Grand: When are we going to start putting our actions where our stated intentions are?**

Dear Councilmembers,

On December 1st you deferred consideration of the closing time for Billy's on Grand to your meeting on the 15th. I would like to take this opportunity for you to consider this issue and the impact it has on the neighbors in this mixed business residential area, and the residential area adjacent on either side of Grand. I live on the corner of Grand and Avon and I and my neighbors directly participated in the public hearing on this before it was referred to the City Council for consideration.

Food service at Billy's ends at 10:30 – 1.5 hours before closing with a midnight closing time. A 2am closing time would be 3.5 hours of liquor only, and realistically even if they extended food service, how many people are going there for a meal after 10pm? Hours of drinking before disgorging customers onto the residential areas of Grand Avenue and adjoining residential at Midnight is bad, and at 1am or 2am is completely unnecessary, unacceptable and an easily avoidable conflict and is completely inconsistent with the stated intentions of the mayor and you, our elected officials – a "community first "approach. The noise, violence and disruption that residents have to deal with after closing is bad at midnight, and completely unacceptable after 2am.

This licensing step is a clear and unmistakable opportunity *to make our "community-first"* in safety, livability, and decrease the strain on our police resources. "…each 1-hour extension of closing hours was associated with a statistically significant increase of 4.8 assaults" (see research below)

Let's start making decisions that reflect our values and aspirations and make our community livable.

Sincerely,

Bob Karls and the concerned citizens of the Grand Avenue neighborhood.

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# St. Paul left reeling after hitting homicide record

The fatal stabbing left leaders with more questions than answers as the city tries to combat an increase in crime that is being mirrored across the country.

**By Katie Galioto, Zoë Jackson and Liz Sawyer** Star Tribune

DECEMBER 3, 2021 — 8:08PM

St. Paul police investigated a homicide in July near the intersection of Western Avenue and Concordia Avenue West, one of the 35 so far recorded in the city this year.

St. Paul was left reeling Friday, a day after a man was stabbed to death in the capital city's record 35th homicide of the year.

The killing, which started over a parking dispute on the 1700 block of East 7th Streeton the East Side, left leaders with more questions than answers as St. Paul tries to combat an increase in crime that is being mirrored across the country.

"The absolute worst part of my job is getting notice that someone's lost their life in this city," Mayor Melvin Carter said Friday. "And I've gotten that notice more times this year than any mayor in the history of our city ever has. That is traumatic. That is heartbreaking."

The homicide Thursday came as Carter prepares to start his second term — and search for a new police chief. Chief Todd Axtell announced in October that he will not seek reappointment.
Since taking office in 2018, Carter has advocated for a "community-first" approach to public safety by rolling out a suite of programs designed to address root causes of crime, such has poverty, which the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated.
St. Paul's population has grown in recent years, meaning the city's homicide rate per capita remains below historic records. But the mayor's critics have argued that the police force has not been bolstered to serve the larger population —a point Axtell made in a plea for money to hire more officers in 2022.
"It's a sad day, but it's not surprising," Mark Ross, president of the St. Paul Police Federation, said Friday. "If we were fully staffed, I don't think we would have reached this number."

Brian Harry Kjellberg, 50, was arrested Friday morning and booked into the Ramsey County Jail on a charge of second-degree murder in the death of Arnell J. Stewart, 27, of Georgia. The victim was identified by the Ramsey County medical examiner.

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# Billy's on Grand will close for winter, blames crime and Covid

**By Mark Reilly – Managing Editor, Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal**

**Oct 30, 2020, 8:27am EDT**

Billy's on Grand , the longtime St. Paul restaurant and sports bar, is shutting its doors for the winter.

The restaurant announced the decision this week on its social media pages, saying, "In an effort to protect the business, recover as much as possible, and to try to create longevity for the classic Grand Ave institution that is Billy's, we've made the difficult decision to close Billy's for the winter."

Its last day for the year will be Saturday.

The restaurant, a fixture on Grand Avenue for decades, was bought by RJMP Group Inc. in January and hired new chef Jeremy Bechtold, most recently chef at the recently shuttered Happy Gnome.

"We all know what happened when March came along," the restaurant said in its statement. "Covid has paralyzed our industry in ways that we could not expect."

Beyond the pandemic, Billy's said it faced growing public safety issues, including a fatal shooting just outside the restaurant last month.

Dozens of restaurants have closed during the pandemic. Others are taking Billy's strategy, opting for a temporary shutdown in the hopes of reopening again once either patio weather returns or customers are able and willing to dine indoors. Surly Brewing has temporarily shut its beer hall, and the Star Tribune reports that Central N.E. (the former Bad Waitress) and Dark Horse Bar are also planning hibernations.

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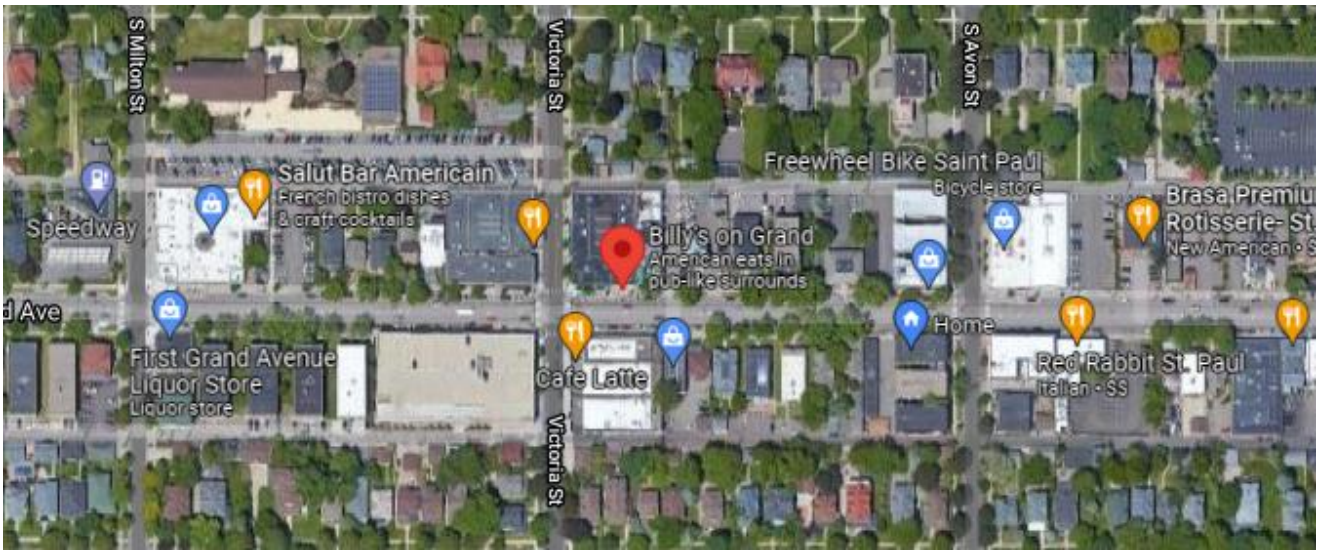
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/51637707_The_impact_of_small_changes_in_bar_closing_hours_on_violence_The_Norwegian_experience_from_18_cities

"… Outcomes from main analyses suggested that each 1-hour extension of closing hours was associated with a statistically significant increase of 4.8 assaults (95% CI 2.60, 6.99) per 100 000 inhabitants per quarter (i.e. an increase of about 16%). Findings indicate that the effect is symmetrical. These findings were consistent across three different modelling techniques "

https://jtyholmes.com/2016/11/14/what-the-increase-of-late-night-bars-mean-for-chicago-neighborhoods/

"…providing customers an easier opportunity to be under the influence late at night puts them at a higher risk of becoming victims of assault, battery, or theft. A bar fight is also more likely to occur the longer a person stays out consuming alcohol and has been documented numerous times at different late hour bars throughout the city,… Chicago residents and tourists have also taken notice of the increased drunken violence taking place around late night bars… it is clear that percentages of assault are increasing in correlation to the extended selling time of alcohol.

https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/23251/412735-Addressing-Violence-and-Disorder-around-Alcohol-Outlets.PDF

…Effective use of the licensing authority can also give a municipal government better control over the activities of drinking establishments. Even if licensing is not used to close problem bars or prohibit the opening of new establishments, *it can be used to regulate their activities*… The presence of large crowds *lingering outside after bars close is associated with larger numbers of assaults* as groups compete for transportation or … are forced to mingle… Studies on bar violence in inner city areas have found that instances of assault at drinking establishments were generally concentrated late at night or early in the morning (Briscoe & Donnelly, 2001)…

This isn't rocket science or new revelations. It is backed up by research. Later serving of alcohol results in more violence, more disturbance on the streets, more strain on our police resources. Midnight is late enough in a mixed residential neighborhood!