

Vang, Mai (CI-StPaul)

From: Bethany Gladhill <bethany@gladhill.org>
Sent: Wednesday, June 13, 2012 9:03 PM
To: Vang, Mai (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Fwd: 466 iglehart and 451 selby

Begin forwarded message:

From: Bethany Gladhill <bethany@gladhill.org>
Date: June 13, 2012 8:53:57 PM CDT
To: Amy Spong <Amy.Spong@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: Melvin Carter <Melvin.Carter@ci.stpaul.mn.us>, marcia.moermond@ci.stpaul.mn.us,
<mai.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Bcc: Kit Richardson <krichardson@sr-re.com>, Patrick Rhone
<patrick@patrickrhone.com>
Subject: 466 iglehart and 451 selby

Members of the HPC and City Council, and City Staff:

I am writing you to encourage you to find restoration, rehabilitation, and/or adaptive use options for the properties located at 466 Iglehart and 451 Selby, rather than ordering their demolition.

I am both an active neighborhood preservationist and a professional preservation planner. It was my service as the Neighborhood Development Chair and board Vice-Chair of the Summit-University Planning Council that set me on that path years ago, and my love of the City of Saint Paul and its unique neighborhoods that keeps me involved. Although I have renovated several homes, I understand that not every property can (or even should) be saved, and I realize that, as Category 3 Vacant Buildings, these properties are in rough shape. However, I think the neighborhood and the city has a lot to lose by demolishing these houses, and nothing to gain.

Should the houses be torn down, it is unlikely that anything will be put in their place, at least for several years. Although one of the most desirable neighborhoods in Saint Paul, Summit-University is still pockmarked by empty lots (many of which are city-owned). These lots contribute nothing to the community, and are a symbol of lost hope. On Selby in particular, in an area that is becoming revitalized due to the hard work of both private parties and the city, an empty lot would be a particular scar.

At the same time, I see a lot of hope in places that are being revitalized. I see scores of properties considered on the East Side for the Neighborhood Stabilization Project. My daughter attends a Montessori school on Dayton, where Andy and Whitney Blessing are pouring their entire future into a prominent home that has long been a symbol of hopelessness. After restoring our former HUD home on Ashland, my husband and I are now renovating a small vacant house in Capitol Heights — next month my mother-in-law will move up here from New Orleans to live there, and is already involved with the Irrigate Arts project.

It's hard work, and we are not always the best in helping to provide support. Both of these houses could likely

be well-served by guidance that helps with design guidelines, assists in looking at federal and the new MN historic tax credits, and provides other assistance. The city is too understaffed to take that on, and there are no non-profits or others I can think of — it makes me desperate for the days of Old Town Restorations! Still, if we could come up with some kind of task force or other help, I would be happy to assist.

There are over 1300 vacant homes in Saint Paul. These are only 2, but they are prominent and their demolition would be an incredible loss for the community. I urge you to do the right thing and help the community find a way to not only bring these back to life, but to extend that to the other homes in need. Now think of how innovative and exciting that would be, and what it would say about the City of Saint Paul, and how it never gives up on its history!

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