

From: [Charlotte Berres](#)
To: [Kady Dadlez](#); [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [*CI-StPaul Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Public Hearing Jan 15 2025
Date: Monday, January 13, 2025 12:56:16 PM
Attachments: [250113 Feedback to the City Council re 1905-1913 Iglehart Avenue 55104.docx](#)

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Dear Council Members:

Attached is my response to the request for a variance on the lots from 1905 - 1913 Iglehart. My response to both requests is no. My explanation is attached. Please read and give my objections some consideration at your council meeting.

My apologies that I will not be able to deliver this in person as I have a previously scheduled appointment during that time.

Charlotte Berres 1919 Iglehart Ave, St Paul, MN 55104

Feedback to the City Council of St. Paul, MN, re variances on NE corner of Iglehart and Howell, 1905-1913 Iglehart

I live on the NW corner of Iglehart and Howell. I have overall remarks about our neighborhood, comments on the specific request, and a PS!

ROOTS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD: After the snow fall on Sunday, I was outside shoveling my walks. A Dad approached with a 7, 5, and 2-year-old all bundled up in snow suits. They were on their way to St. Mark's Gym to play with many other young children from the neighborhood. I asked if they ever went sliding at the Merriam Park Community Center. Their little eyes lit up and the oldest had to tell me all about sliding. I commented that when I was little, I loved to go sliding on those hills as well. Those hills in the park are enduring to our neighborhood.

This morning in the bitter cold, I went out the front door to get my newspaper – down the street was a Mom taking her three children to a private language school, across the street were another six teens waiting for the school bus, and out the back was a Dad taking his boys to another private school. Between 6:40 and 8:10, four other buses had come by to pick-up other students of younger ages. The neighborhood is full of children. Families have returned. Roots are being put down. The future of Merriam Park full of families is coming to life!

In the early 2000's, the aging neighborhood welcomed six families with babies who moved into this area. Those babies, the fourteen children are now the teenagers of our neighborhood. Others came. Over the last few years, another five more families moved in with little ones. All these children are our future. Hopefully, when they all grow up, they, too, will want to bring their children to go sliding on the Merriam Park hills! They and their children will fill the City of St. Paul.

Over the last fifty years, many of these large homes have been converted to student housing. Recently, we have Sober Homes. Over the years, my dog loves to lie at the back fence greeting all those who come by. As I garden, I attempt to chat with people. Both the students and patients come and go; every year I learn new names and then they are gone. The family members stay and year by year grow up. (It takes 3 years to learn and remember names!) Yes, we welcome everyone, yet, I prefer to welcome those who will put down roots in this neighborhood.

I look across the street at the two empty lots. Yes, John Mathern has been open to talking with the neighbors. He even changed his design to fit into the neighborhood with Victorian roof lines, porches, doors and windows. I am grateful. He moved and updated the oldest historical house in the neighborhood keeping many of the exterior features in place. Though, by creating a million-dollar house in this neighborhood, he increased my tax assessment by 27%. I believe in paying taxes, yet, concerned about the effect of high-income housing on all our taxes. Will families be able to afford a home in Merriam Park?

In chatting with John, I realize he needs to build six tiny homes to attract young professional single people. He says that's what the market is looking for in the city close to the downtowns. I know he needs to make money on his development. I would much prefer two Victorian style homes of 4 bedrooms, a back yard for playing, and a detached garage facing the ally. I believe our first priority as a neighborhood is to accommodate growing families. Yet, I realize John can't accommodate my dreams!

THE SPECIFIC REQUEST The issue at hand: I cannot support the two requested variances. 1) an interior lot without access to an alley: this would mean another narrow alley from Howell through the middle of two lots to accommodate the interior houses. Too much land is being given to a roadway. How about four tall thin tiny homes facing Iglehart with access from the alley (and a back yard)? 2) I cannot support a pedestrian easement 5 feet wide over two lots. The two current lots are not large enough to accommodate 5 houses and an extra alley and the walkway. Two houses imitating the original Victorian models in the neighborhood would be sufficient to fill the land.

PS – A PROPOSAL: Since I have daily observed these empty lots the last four years, I have come to enjoy the open visual space! If John wearies of all the paperwork, and wants to donate the land to the city (with an iron fence around it) to create a closed-in park, I would happily create gardens - a hosta, flower, veggie gardens with walking paths, benches under the shade trees, and picnic tables for outdoor gatherings. Of course, I dream! Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a quiet place in the city for people to ponder, read, and thoughtfully play in the outdoor open air?

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