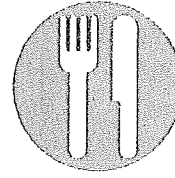
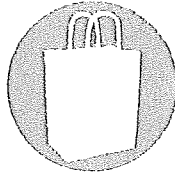


**FILE**  
12-079595



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# GRAND AVENUE

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649 Grand Ave.

St. Paul, MN

55105

651.699.0029 p

651.699.7775 f

[grandave.com](http://grandave.com)

Board of Zoning and Appeals  
Room 330 – City Hall  
St. Paul, MN 55102

June 25, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

The Grand Avenue Business Association is writing in support of the signage variance application for Creative Kidstuff, located at 1074 Grand Avenue. The application request is to allow for the installation of a tiger and a lion sculpture at the front entrance of the store. Both the tiger and the lion are unique sculptures that are intended to be art and not signage.

The Grand Avenue Business Association supports this variance application because we believe it will be of benefit to the business, to the patrons of Creative Kidstuff, as well as to the vitality of the area. Creative Kidstuff has been a cornerstone of Grand Avenue for almost thirty years and is a significant component of the area and community. The Grand Avenue Business Association appreciates your consideration of this application and hopes you vote in favor of the variance.

Sincerely,

Sue Evens  
Executive Director

**Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)**

---

**From:** mcflahaven@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, June 18, 2012 5:36 PM  
**To:** "Jeff Roy@summithill"@visi.com; Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** Major sign Variance for Creative Kidstuff, File #12-063863

FILE  
12-077595

To: Summit Hill Association, Zoning and Land Use Committee  
Board of Zoning Appeals

From: Maureen & Patrick Flahaven, homeowners of 1073 Lincoln Avenue

Re: Request for Major Variance for Creative Kidstuff signage

We are opposed to granting the request for a variance from the maximum allowable 80 square feet to 225 square feet for this business.

This is a well known long standing business with plenty of frontage on Grand Avenue that already enjoys a variance to 103 square feet. To allow 225 square feet would almost triple the permitted area. Signage was a problem on Grand Avenue for many years prior to the efforts of many citizens to have the sign district plan adopted. The master plan, also many years in the development, called for reducing the chaos of signage in the area. This was to reduce increasing size and problems with hazards on a busy Grand Avenue as people tried to see beyond one sign to the next. This business, besides it's existing signage has an open space next to it for a parking lot, so there is no competing building signage next to it to block the view of its present signs.

Such a huge change as putting building high cut-out cat designs will cause traffic to have attention diverted and possibly cause accidents. If one establishment is permitted such a gross enlargement, what would prevent say, a two story high beer bottle enveloping a bar or a monster cupcake surrounding an entrance to a bakery, etc.

Grand Avenue and the homes in this area are of a traditional design and older vintage. Both the sign district plan and the master plan recognize and respect this. This sign would be totally out of character, as well as size, to the neighborhood and a gross violation of the intent and content of the Comprehensive Plan developed and adopted by business and neighbors over a lengthy detailed process.

12-077595

# Summit Hill Association

June 21, 2012

Board of Zoning Appeals  
Yaya Diatta, Staff  
375 Jackson St., Suite 220  
St. Paul, MN 55101

District 16 Planning Council  
860 Saint Clair Avenue  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105  
Telephone 651-222-1222  
Fax 651-222-1558  
www.summithillassociation.org  
e-mail: summithill@visi.com

**RE: Zoning File Number #12-063863**

Dear Members of the Board:

The Zoning and Land Use Committee (ZLU) of the Summit Hill Association (SHA) - District 16 Planning Council held a neighborhood public hearing on Tuesday, June 19, 2012 to review an application submitted to the City of St. Paul by Roberta Bonoff representing Creative Kidstuff - located at 1074 Grand Avenue.

The applicant is requesting a variance of *The Grand Avenue Special Sign District* code requirement in order to install new signs for Creative Kidstuff at 1074 Grand. The property is zoned B2. The *Sign District* code limits signage to 80 sq. ft. The business has currently one wall and one projecting sign totaling 103 sq. ft on the building facing Grand Avenue. The applicant is proposing to remove the existing signage and install three new wall signs and one projecting sign totaling 225 sq. ft. for a variance of 145 sq. feet.

The Zoning and Land Use Committee had solicited input from the surrounding property owners and tenants within 350 feet. In response, SHA received no comments of support for this application. There was one message of concern received from Maureen and Pat Flahaven, 1073 Lincoln Avenue.

At the June 19th hearing, the ZLU Committee discussed the application with Ms Bonoff while referring to the *City of St. Paul Zoning Code - Chap. 61.601 - Variances; Chap. 64.207. - Sign Variances* and the *Grand Avenue Sign District Plan* (revised and adopted August 2009) as guidelines for its deliberations. The Committee also referred to the June 8, 2012 BZA Staff Report by YaYa Diatta in terms of his findings and recommendation to deny the variance application.

The Committee heard a brief presentation from Ms. Bonoff about the project, the competing interpretations of whether the proposed large "cats" at the doorway would be "signage" as characterized by St. Paul city staff or "sculpture" as defined by the applicant. She sincerely noted that after 30 years of being a business & good neighbor on Grand Avenue, Creative Kidstuff would not do anything to hurt the neighborhood or Grand Avenue. She indicated that the cat "sculptures" are art that gives delight to children entering the store and would be an effort to put more art in the community. Ms Bonoff noted that this was one of the key motives of the owner of the Creative Kidstuff businesses in proposing this change to the exterior.

Ms. Bonoff noted that after meeting with City Zoning Staff regarding this issue, Ms Bonoff understood that Staff determined that the proposed sculptures did qualify as "signs" under current St. Paul City code ordinance *Sec 64.121. - Sign: "The use of words, numerals, figures, devices, designs or trademarks the purpose of which is to show or advertise a person, firm, profession, business, product or message."* Finally, members of the ZLU Committee asked if the figures could be modified in size or number. Ms.

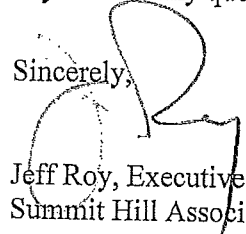
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Bonoff indicated she could be open to suggestions, but had expended significant time and money on the present design.

After a full discussion - and expressing that the applicant's business is a wonderful asset to the neighborhood and part of the very fabric of Grand Avenue; a motion was made and seconded, based in part on the rationale of the June 8, 2012 BZA Staff findings, to recommend to the BZA that this sign variance application be denied. The motion was approved by the ZLU Committee on a vote of 3 in favor and 1 opposed. According to SHA policies, as an SHA Board meeting does not occur prior to the June 25, 2012 BZA hearing, the Committee's recommendation to deny of this application file #12-063863 serves as the recommendation of the Summit Hill Association/District 16 Planning Council.

If you have any questions about this recommendation, please contact me at 651-222-1222.

Sincerely,



Jeff Roy, Executive Director  
Summit Hill Association/District 16 Planning Council

CC: Roberta Bonhoff  
Maureen & Pat Flahaven  
SHA Zoning Committee Members  
Councilmember Dave Thune