



October 4, 2018

Council President Amy Brendmoen
and Members of the City Council

Re: Appeal of the zoning variance for the Little Grocery 1724 University Ave. W.

I represent the Stairstep Foundation, a faith based organization dedicated to improving the lives of our members and the broader community. We strongly advocated for the passage of the menthol ordinance and were supportive of the distance requirements between tobacco shops and the cap on tobacco licenses that Saint Paul has imposed.

Heavy concentrations of tobacco outlets negatively impacts our neighborhoods and research shows that these heavy concentrations actually are associated with higher levels of youth tobacco use. The reasons given by the council for imposing the half mile distance requirement and the license cap indicated that the council shared our concern. The effort by the Little Grocery to avoid these regulations should not be allowed. The Saint Paul Midway area already has a very large number of tobacco outlets. Only one other area of the city has more density.

I would also like to point out that a tobacco shop, which often sell as much drug paraphernalia as tobacco, is highly inappropriate within two blocks of the Midway YMCA, Twin Town Treatment Center, a residential treatment center for chemically dependent men, and Junior Achievement.

The owner's only rational for re-opening his closed convenience store as a new tobacco store is that he wants to make a profit. That is not a justification for granting a variance under the state's zoning law.

Please reject this appeal to allow a new tobacco store in the Midway area.

Respectfully,

Dr. Sylvia Amos
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