

## McMonigal-St Dennis, Barb (CI-StPaul)

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**From:** Wallace, William G. <bwallace@hamline.edu>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 16, 2014 12:55 PM  
**To:** McMonigal-St Dennis, Barb (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** The Happy Gnome sound variance request

February 16, 2014

**TO:** Ms Barb McMonigal-St. Dennis  
City of Saint Paul Department of Safety and Inspections

**FROM:** Bill Wallace and Karen Reither  
477 Laurel Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55104

**RE:** Sound Level Variance requested by The Happy Gnome

We are contacting you to register our objection to granting The Happy Gnome a sound level variance for a DJ with speakers for their advertised Ice Bar event scheduled for February 22, 2014 from 6:00 PM until 12:00 midnight.

We would acknowledge that The Happy Gnome has been a generally good neighbor. Their prior beer tent events, although obviously impacting traffic and parking in our neighborhood, have been well managed and have ended promptly at 11:00 PM. The music, contained within the tent, has also not been too intrusive. This event, without the barrier of the tent and with a longer playing time promises to be much different and we do not want to begin to see a program of late night events in this residential area. The Happy Gnome is surrounded on three sides by multi-story condominiums and apartment buildings. There is no buffer or significant distance that would allow for the sound to disperse. Instead the sound is reflected and echoed off our homes.

Our experience with the summer jazz music program on the deck at The Happy Gnome provides us with considerable experience with the ways in which sound travels in this area. During Sunday afternoons the jazz group playing at The Happy Gnome is clearly audible on Laurel Avenue and can be heard in our home over the sound of fans and air conditioning units. Usually this music ends by 5:00 PM so, while it is an inconvenience and means that if we wish to read the paper on our porch on Laurel it must be done to a musical accompaniment not of our choosing, at least the musicians take breaks and the music volume is generally restrained. This event, planned in conjunction with the Crashed Ice program down the street, is of an entirely different magnitude and with an entirely different kind of music program.

With a projected potential audience of 100,000 people at the Crashed Ice event, the neighborhood impact is already considerable and the potential for an overflow crowd on the small patio at The Happy Gnome is high. The clear temptation to boost the music to fill the area outside the patio and into the parking lot is going to irresistible – indeed the variance request here would seem to indicate that this is the plan. Audio reinforcement for a patio which cannot seat more than 75 patrons would hardly require a major sound system.

We are asking for the following alterations to this request – to acknowledge that a balance between commercial interests and the quality of life of the residents in this area need to be maintained.

1. That the music end by 11:00 PM
2. That the sound levels are monitored and controlled and that the sound peaks at 70 dB to 80 dB (average to loud street noise levels) across the alley from the patio.
3. That the speakers be positioned toward the audience and not toward surrounding homes.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.