

# PAYNE PHALEN DISTRICT FIVE PLANNING COUNCIL

STRONG  SAFE  WELCOMING  CONNECTED  NEIGHBORHOODS

July 12, 2011

Legislative Hearing Officer  
Room 330, City Hall  
15 West Kellogg Boulevard,  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

The Payne Phalen District Five Planning Council's Community Planning & Economic Development Committee (CPED) met with the property owner Douglas Simek and Property Manager Clinton Blaiser at the July 8, 2011 CPED meeting. CPED voted to take a position seeking demolition of this property and supporting the repair or removal of the building. The neighborhood does not find this property to be an asset to the community and has found this property to have a blighting influence.

The neighborhood position is that this property should be demolished. This is the position of the Railroad Island Taskforce, the Community Planning and Economic Development Committee (CPED) and the District Five Board of Directors.

The CPED Committee heard from the owners regarding their plans for rehab of the property. CPED also heard input and acknowledged past testimony about the property from the Railroad Island Taskforce. The CPED Committee also received a signed letter from neighbors and heard from a neighbor who represented this group.

The District Five Board of Directors has also taken this same position to uphold the informed position of the Railroad Island Taskforce and neighbors living in the area.

Reasons include:

#### **Informed resident input over time speaks to demolition as preferred outcome**

The Railroad Island Vacant Housing Taskforce has recommended demolition for this structure. This group was tasked to research the vacant properties in this neighborhood and rank the preferred disposition of each property. The group did this work with input from residents, from local experience with the property as well as external data from police or DSI.

#### **Overcrowded parcel**

The building holds 5 3-Bedroom units and two studio apartments. The building and the paved drive consume all available space on the parcel. There is simply no place for residents to step outside their homes without being on the sidewalk or in the street. Historically, residents have spilled out into the street and this crowded condition has led to conflicts and nuisance behavior.

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**Unsafe for children**

For children, this is not a safe or healthy space to live. Children were frequently in the street at this busy corner. It seems unlikely that the 3-bedroom units would only go to house adults and the neighbors express concerns for children's safety at this location.

**Physical space supports negative outcomes**

While nuisance behavior cannot always be tied to an environmental factor – in this case the physical layout encourages nuisance behavior. There are simply too many people crowded onto this parcel. District Five does not believe that this parcel adequately supports housing that allows neighbors to live safely, comfortably and in ways that support the rest of the neighborhood.

**Current Conditions**

The building has long been in serious disrepair. The current owner has stated he purchased the loan on the building for \$100,000 and intends to rehab the building to bring it up to code. Neighbors' experience with this building suggests that it is beyond reasonable conditions for repair.

We appreciate your inclusion of these perspectives which support demolition as the preferred outcome for 580 East Minnehaha.

Sincerely,



Leslie McMurray  
Executive Director/ Lead Organizer



**MPL Specialties**

549 E. Minnehaha Ave. St. Paul, MN. 55130

(651) 771- 4541

July 12, 2011

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kathy Kieffer and I'm a Business Owner in Railroad Island, 549 Minnehaha Ave. E. My reason for writing this letter is to plead with the Police Department, ESND or whatever agency willing to listen to the neighbors of this area about the possibility of another investor opening up the property at 580 Minnehaha Ave E. This property was the blight of the neighborhood, not to mention the numerous police calls, drive by shootings, gang activity and constant drug activity. I had several of my female employees quitting because of this area. This directly affects my business, my personal life and my quality of life.

We don't need or want another apartment building filled with Section 8 and/or dirt bags from the lowest forms of life coming in and taking over our neighborhood again. There is no yard at that site, so that means more unsavory people on the streets looking for trouble or approaching my customers for money or hand outs.

Please do not let this happen! Since my husband passed away last August, I operate my business alone and with several other women and we are really in fear from day to day. I live at this building also, and I'm here in this building alone at night, which is very frightening. I'm asking that you please put a stop to this building being reopened and operating. I, along with many neighbors feel that this building should be torn down and have some green area, it would be very helpful to that corner, Edgerton & Minnehaha.

Here are several signatures from my fellow neighbors that feel the same way that I do and wish that you take this under consideration for the good of the people here in Railroad Island. We have to preserve what we have, and we've been working for the last 15 years trying to clean up this neighborhood. **Please, here our voices!**

Sincerely,

Kathy Kieffer  
*Kathy Kieffer*  
MPL Specialties  
549 Minnehaha Ave. E, St. Paul, MN. 55130

<i>J.P. Triff</i>	<i>Lynn LeBlanc</i>
<i>Debra Kieffer</i>	<i>Jean LeBlanc</i>
<i>Judith Blankenship</i>	<i>Kathleen Stuckney</i>
<i>Jan Kimo</i>	
<i>Carrie Robles</i>	