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CITY COUNCIL
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June 6, 2017

Ms. Jane L. Prince, Councilmember
City of St. Paul, Minnesota City Council
320-C City Hall Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Ms. Prince,

This letter is to provide a status report on our plans for the redevelopment of the SE corner of Snelling Ave. at St. Clair. As of this writing, our request for the rezoning of the property to T-3 has been approved by the district council and the planning commission. The city council has delayed review of this rezoning application until June 21, however, to allow the South Snelling Master Rezoning Proposal (which also calls for this parcel to be changed to T-3) to catch up.

The planning commission has reviewed the South Snelling Master Rezoning Proposal favorably but has asked that it be reviewed and approved by a reorganized subcommittee so that the record of its approval can be complete. It is not clear to us whether the South Snelling Master Rezoning Proposal will reach the city council by June 21, 2017, however.

Under any circumstances, we urge that the property be rezoned to T-3 to allow its sale and redevelopment as a mixed use property. As many on the council are aware, the property is in severe disrepair and the redevelopment of the property to a higher density use will be consistent with transit corridors of other major cities.

We also strongly support the flexibility of height at this property through a CUP. Due to a high water table, the typical below grade parking design is not possible, leaving few options other than building height to achieve the desired density.

During the course of review and approval of our proposal by the district council and the planning commission, we have listened carefully to the concerns of neighbors and interested citizens, particularly relating to height, density and streetscape. As a result, we have reduced the unit count from 185 to 128, reduced the height of the building and also added three townhouse residences along Snelling Avenue to add scale to the streetscape and improve the walkability for residents and visitors.

While not required, we have also added 20 parking spaces for neighboring commercial interests to allay their concerns about lost parking on the corner parcel, which currently serves as a surface parking lot. We have pulled the apartments back from the easterly boundary along the alley and confirmed through our architects that we do not shadow the neighbors to the west or the solar panels of the business to the north. We believe that these changes meet and exceed the reasonable needs and concerns of the neighborhood residents, and fulfill the spirit and intent of the applicable ordinances and codes of the city of St. Paul.

We enclose for your information the latest Snelling facade rendering showing the townhouses and the floor plan for the included parking.

In the meantime, a title dispute has surfaced with respect to the corner parking lot which impacts the ability of the Sellers to convey title. The matter is now in the Court of Appeals and it is unlikely a final determination will be reached in the near term. Settlement discussions are underway but the outcome of these discussions is uncertain.

In light of this ongoing title issue, the contract purchasers have halted all development activity relating to this property until such time as there is further clarity and resolution of the title issue. Due to these issues, the contract purchasers have not filed a CUP and site plan application for our new plan.

We regret having to halt our efforts to greatly improve this blighted property. We have expended significant funds for architectural and civil design, legal, and planning on the project but are hopeful that the title issue will be resolved. We also are hopeful that the council will move to apply a T-3 zoning to the property, recognizes the challenges to the property that necessitate the CUP, and concurs that the current site plan represents the best feedback from designers and neighbors.

Thank you for your consideration of our development proposal.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Hayden
Director of Development



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Snelling MF | Saint Paul, Minnesota

West Elevation 04/25/2017

