

Sheffer, Vicki (CI-StPaul)

From: Cynthia McKeen <proongily@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, June 24, 2016 11:57 AM
To: *CI-StPaul_LH-Licensing
Subject: Gambling at La Cucharacha

Legislative Hearing Office
310 City Hall
15 West Kellogg Blvd
Saint Paul, Mn 55102

Hello,

We live near La Cucharacha and are very supportive of their presence in the neighborhood; however, we strongly object to their proposed gambling request. Keeping this busy neighborhood livable for its residential components has taken years of work and neighborhood activism. We are glad for the success of Grand Ave, but that success continues to draw an overabundance of options that do not have the neighborhood's interest at heart. As you are no doubt more than aware, parking is always a delicate balance here, and the behaviors of those parking, although occasionally humorous, are more often noisy and uproarious at all hours and any additional incentives will likely draw more of that crowd. For those who enjoy gambling, the Twin Cities offers plenty of other options. The mix of residences and businesses can work well as this area has proven, but that unique combination needs watching and cooperation. A gambling precedent opens up our neighborhood to another whole state of siege. The success of this neighborhood depends upon a large number of homeowners who keep up our buildings and gardens, and who support policies that keep the neighborhood safe for residents and visitors. One nice restaurant having gambling options may not produce many negative outcomes, but it will be followed by others; our experience with Grand Old Days has shown us that a day of crowds is manageable, but some behaviors, increasing year round, have no appeal. Thank you for your consideration.

John and Cynthia McKeen
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228-0072

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St. Paul, MN 55102
June 24, 2016

Legislative Hearing Office
310 City Hall
15 W. Kellogg Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Sir or Madam:

We cannot think of any good argument for allowing gambling at La Cucharacha, in our part of Saint Paul.

We can think of a number of reasons not to allow pull tabs, tip boards, raffle tickets, paddle wheels, etc. in our neighborhood.

First, and probably foremost, is that introducing gambling would contribute to the worsening of an already bad parking situation. This is a fairly high-density urban residential neighborhood, one of the very best in the Twin Cities. It's already becoming increasingly difficult for people who visit to find places to park. Providing an incentive for additional non-residents to come so they can gamble would make neighborhood property less desirable, reduce property values, and possibly result in a lower tax base.

Some businesses - gambling, for instance, or tattoo or massage parlors, do not strengthen a community - they weaken it. At the very least, allowing gambling would set an unfortunate precedent. If it's permitted at La Cucharacha, what arguments could keep it out of the Tavern on Grand, the Wild Onion, or any of the other restaurants and bars nearby, with the problems that gambling invariably brings with it and the consequent loss of much of the special ambiance that this neighborhood enjoys?

Those who desire this change need to convince us of how their scheme will improve our neighborhood. Has the introduction of gambling ever improved a residential area? This is no ordinary neighborhood, but Summit Hill, part of an important historic district, worthy of special consideration and deserving protection.

To say that the introduction of gambling at the restaurant is to benefit charity is not a compelling reason: surely a better way to help the poor and the vulnerable would be to continue to disallow such activities.

Thank you for taking our opinions into account as you consider this issue which is of real importance to the future of our neighborhood.

Yours sincerely,

Dennis and Christine Graf

282-6328