

Gregory L. Wilmes
980 Lincoln Avenue
Saint Paul, Mn 55105
Tel. 612-465-0267
E mail: wilmes@ncequity.net

Via US Mail

Kevin VanDeraa
3338 University Ave. SE.
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Mayor Chris Coleman
Via fax to:
(651) 266-8521

April 1, 2012

Re: Proposed Parking Variance for Cupcake on Grand Avenue is Unsafe and Dangerous

Dear Mr. VanDeraa and Mayor Coleman:

I write as the father of three children who live very near the proposed parking lot for the Cupcake wine bar, which is seeking a parking variance to allow it to operate at 949 Grand Avenue.

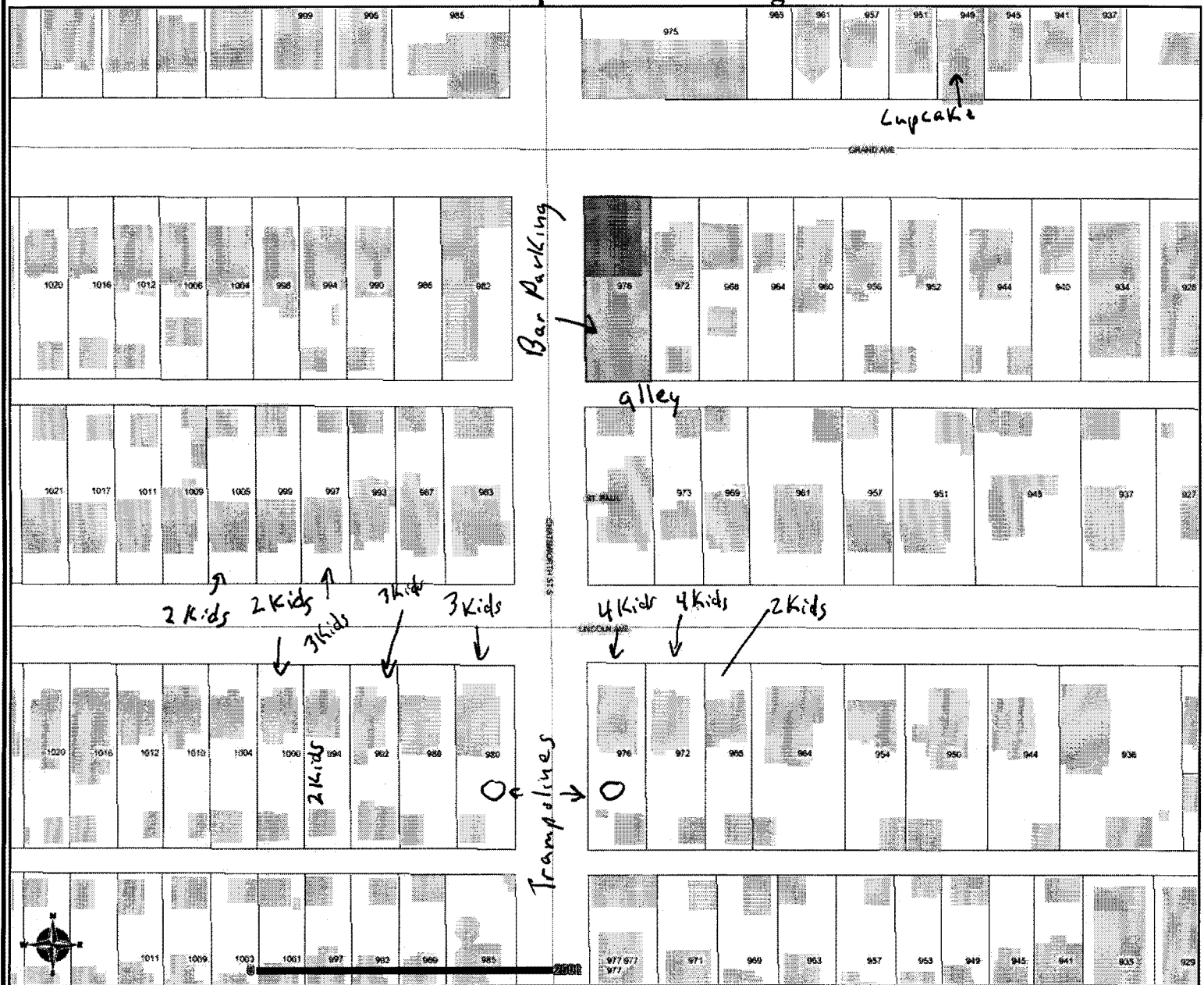
Granting a variance for the Cupcake bar based on parking at the proposed location (behind Anderson Cleaners on Chatsworth) is unsafe and dangerous because there are many young children who live in the area. A cluster of young children live at the intersection that buzzed patron's of the Cupcake bar will likely pass after drinking at the bar.

I live at the corner of Lincoln and Chatsworth, a half block from the proposed parking for the bar patrons. Three children eleven and under live in my home. There are at least 25 young children who live on Lincoln in the immediate vicinity of the Lincoln and Chatsworth intersection where bar patrons are likely to travel upon leaving the bar.

You could not have selected a more unsafe and dangerous place to put parking for the patrons of a bar. It would hazardous to allow a parking lot for patrons of a bar so near a residential area heavily populated with young children.

Look at the map attached. The intersection of Chatsworth and Lincoln is a children's cluster.

Cupcake bar Parking Problems



- Selected Features
- Municipalities
- Road Centerlines (County)
- County Road
- Interstate Hwy
- State Hwy
- Roads
- Water
- Structures
- Parcel Polygons
- Highway Shields
- Street Name Labels

DISCLAIMER: This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This map is a compilation of records, information and data located in various city, county, state and federal offices and other sources regarding the area shown, and is to be used for reference purposes only.

SOURCES: Ramsey County (February 27, 2012), The Lawrence Group; February 27, 2012 for County parcel and property records data; February 2012 for commercial and residential data; April 2009 for color aerial

Cupcake bar patrons are likely to drive to the child cluster intersection after leaving the bar. Slightly buzzed Cupcake patron's headed for Lexington will try to avoid a left turn on already over-trafficked Grand Avenue. Instead, they will turn left to the residential intersection at Lincoln and Chatsworth, where encountering one of the numerous young children in the area is a distinct possibility. This is a kid friendly neighborhood where children frequently cross the intersection to play with friends well into the evening on long summer nights.

And, two homes at the intersection have backyard trampolines, which operate as kid magnets for young children throughout the neighborhood. It is also not unusual to see kids playing ball or tag in the street in and near the intersection. I know kids are not supposed to play in the street—but they do—and it is the height of irresponsibility to place a parking lot for bar patrons in an area where this is known to occur.

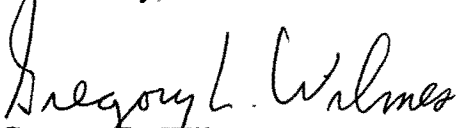
Mr. VanDeraa, I ask you to set aside your desire for profit in favor of the safety of children. The dangers of "buzzed driving" by people drinking alcohol are well known. Placing a parking lot for your wine drinking patrons in the midst of a residential neighborhood heavily populated with young children is reckless—at the very least grossly negligent—and is wrong.

If Mr. VanDeraa wants a bar on Grand Avenue, I suggest he buy sufficient land on Grand Avenue at market prices to accommodate both his bar and the parking it requires under existing law. Mr. VanDeraa should have personal legal responsibility for any injuries to children in the neighborhood caused by his bar's sales of alcohol, but that will be little comfort to the family affected.

Mayor Coleman, what were thinking? You were elected to enforce the zoning and parking laws of this City, not to sweep them away whenever a friend finds them inconvenient or an obstacle to profit. Zoning laws are not cobwebs that become porous and permissive and evaporate into mist whenever the Mayor finds them a barrier to a friend's business objectives. You probably have governmental immunity, but you have moral responsibility to do the right thing here and withdraw your support for placing a bar parking lot in the middle of a cluster of children.

There are so many kids in the immediate neighborhood of the bar parking lot, that I cannot remember them all. The risk you are taking with your proposal is not worth it. Mayor Coleman, please withdraw your veto threat, withdraw your support for this irresponsible plan, and support the City Council's decision rejecting a parking variance for Cupcake on Grand.

Yours truly,



Gregory L. Wilmes
980 Lincoln Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Cc: Dave Thune (Dave.Thune@ci.stpaul.mn.us)
Dan Bostrom (ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us)
Amy Brendmoen (ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us)
Melvin Carter (ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us)
Kathy Lantry (ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us)
Chris Tolbert (ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us)
Russ Stark (ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us)
Erin Dady (erin.dady@ci.stpaul.mn.us)