

**From:** Javen Swanson <prjaven@gloriadeistpaul.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 1:04 PM  
**To:** \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Subject:** Regarding Minnesota Acre Farms, LLC

Dear members of the City Council,

Recently I have been in communication with the founders of Minnesota Acre Farms, LLC, who have been working to launch a hydroponic urban farming business in St. Paul. They reached out to me months ago hoping that, once their farm was fully operational, they could work with our congregation's hunger ministries to ensure that some of the local produce they grow could be distributed to neighbors who struggle with food insecurity. We were eager to partner with them, recognizing that hunger is a serious problem even in our Highland Park neighborhood.

It has come to our attention that the farm has been issued a code violation and the future of their operation is in doubt. I do not know all the details; perhaps they made some missteps along the way or did not do their due diligence in securing appropriate permits before proceeding with their endeavor.

Regardless, I am writing to encourage the City Council to consider whatever policy changes would be required to allow for the kind of urban agriculture Minnesota Acre Farms, LLC, aims to create. It is my understanding that over 250 municipalities across the country, including Minneapolis, already have such provisions in place. As the most livable city in America, St. Paul should welcome innovative businesses finding ways to provide our community year-round with locally-grown produce.

I understand that the City Council intends to discuss this matter at its meeting on October 21, and I ask that you take these comments into consideration.

Thank you,

Pastor Javen Swanson (he/him/his)  
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church  
700 Snelling Ave. S.  
St. Paul, MN 55116  
651-699-1378  
[www.gloriadeistpaul.org](http://www.gloriadeistpaul.org)

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**From:** Erik and Sarah <electricbasset@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 1:37 PM  
**To:** \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Cc:** Stark, Russ (CI-StPaul) <russ.stark@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Subject:** Writing on behalf of MN Acre Farms

Hello,

I'm encouraging the City Council to consider how to work with MN Acre Farms to find a way to resolution and allow this innovative urban farming to work inside St. Paul. We cannot say that we are

working toward effective greenhouse gas reduction and not looking at the most local food production possible. Transportation accounts for the majority of Minnesota's greenhouse gas emissions. Without a greenhouse, fresh produce in the winter is necessarily trucked from a long distance. Please consider ways to allow this to proceed.

Thank you,

Erik Bigelow  
1266 Berkeley Ave, St Paul

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From: Nicole Frey <nhfrey@att.net>  
Sent: Friday, October 16, 2020 3:14 PM  
To: \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
Subject: Hydroponic container garden

Hello city council,

I am a resident of Saint Paul's Mac Groveland neighborhood. I support Minnesota Acre Farms' hydroponic farm because it provides fresh produce to the neighborhood and is better for the environment than traditional agriculture. At your meeting on October 21, please reconsider the code violation and allow Minnesota Acre Farms to continue their hydroponic garden at this location. This benefits the neighborhood and I do not care that it looks like a storage container.

Thank you,

Nicole Frey  
1618 Saint Clair Avenue

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From: Lindsey Clayton King <yogagirl313@gmail.com>  
Sent: Friday, October 16, 2020 3:31 PM  
To: \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
Subject: Mn Acre Farms

Please allow Minnesota Acre Farms to continue to provide delicious, nutritious, organic produce to our community. I live on Berkeley a few houses from Snelling, so the farm is just a few blocks away from me. I think the appearance is just fine and you should let them stay.

Please support urban farms.

Thank you,

Lindsey Clayton-King

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**From:** Harold Turnquist <hturnqui@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 4:55 PM  
**To:** \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Subject:** Minnesota Acre Farms, LLC

Dear Members of the City Council,

We are writing in support of Minnesota Acre Farms, LLC in their appeal to an order from a hearing officer that would effectively put the company out of business and consequently deprive City residents of the companies fresh and wholesome locally grown produce.

It is very concerning that the City proposes to force this new and innovative company out of business due to the outward appearance of their facility. At a time when the City has chosen to allow practices such as back yard chicken coops and vegetation on City boulevards which many find questionable, it is highly concerning that the City staff are pushing to close an environmentally sound business, apparently solely for cosmetic reasons.

The City needs new, creative, and environmentally responsible endeavors such as Minnesota Acre Farms'. We would urge the Council to allow Minnesota Acre Farms to continue to operate their environmentally responsible business, which is harming no one, is providing fresh wholesome produce to City residents and represents the innovation badly needed in the current economic and pandemic environment.

Sincerely,  
Harold Turnquist  
Anne Novotny  
Michael Novotny-Turnquist  
1915 Beechwood Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55116

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**From:** Erin Edzards <erin.edzards@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 4:55 PM  
**To:** \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Subject:** hydroponic farm MN Acre Farm

City Council of Saint Paul,

Firstly, Thank you for the work you do to serve our city!

I want to speak in support of the hydroponic "farm" that is housed in a storage container in a business's parking lot off of Snelling. I understand we don't want a city full of storage containers, but this seems like a good, efficient use of space to provide hyper-local, fresh foods to residents of Saint Paul. I would much rather have a few storage containers around and support local growers than buy packaged food at a big box store that probably doesn't have as much of an investment in Saint Paul.

Thank you!  
Erin Edzards  
1776 Juliet Ave, Saint Paul

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**From:** Hansen Halla <hansenhalla@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 6:02 PM  
**To:** \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Cc:** Chris Tolbert <chris@christolbert.org>  
**Subject:** Agenda for Oct. 21 General Meeting: Minnesota Acre Farms LLC

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We recently became aware of a neighborhood business that engages in hydroponic farming in St. Paul.

Minnesota Acre Farms indicates that they own a container off of Snelling Avenue where they intend to grow fresh organic produce. We have been informed that this business was issued notice of a City code violation because of the type of structure in which it operates.

We are writing to indicate our support for Minnesota Acre Farms and its hydroponic business. Hydroponic farming does not require the use of pesticides or herbicides, which would affect our City water system. In addition, the City will benefit from the increased revenue collected from this operation, as there are many people in our area who support organic farming and would likely buy this company's produce. Although the current structure may be unusual, this is a start-up business that chooses to operate in St. Paul and offers a wholesome product for which there is already a market. Since very few new businesses have the means to immediately purchase a building, particularly in the current climate, we believe this business should be afforded some consideration for its informed choice of location and, frankly, its ingenuity.

We respect the need for regulation of businesses. We do not believe the current notice is justified in this case. We urge the City Council to waive the issued notice of violation, allow Minnesota Acre Farms to continue its operation and moreover, consider aiding this business in a search for a more permanent location.

Respectfully,

John Halla & Christine Hansen

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**From:** Steve Netzman <snetzman@usfamily.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 7:17 PM  
**To:** \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Subject:** What are you doing?

To the council,

I've been given to understand that you have mistakenly classified a piece of facility equipment owned by Minnesota Acre Farms, LLC. as a "Storage Container" rather than a hydroponic

plant growing receptacle, which is what it really is. Why do you persist in calling it a storage container?.

As I understand it, hydroponic gardening involves growing in a medium—such as enriched water—until plants contained are mature and harvested. Nothing is stored there, All contents are transient and replaced over time throughout the growth cycle. I can only assume you are influenced by the land-based agriculture industry who may fear a loss of market in current and especially future incursion by hydroponics.

If so, might I remind you that you have no role in steering the direction of markets and no right in denying the truth about the use of these containers.

I add that I write as a totally independent citizen who has no financial or other interest in hydroponics in Minnesota (or elsewhere, for that matter). And I write only to object your capricious mislabeling of these units.

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From: Sarah Romans <sarahdromans@hotmail.com>  
Sent: Friday, October 16, 2020 8:02 PM  
To: \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
Subject: Support for Minnesota Acre Farms hydroponictank

Hello-

On behalf of my family and I we want more businesses like Minnesota Acre Farms and their clever and environmentally friendly hydroponic farm. Please listen to the community to update our city codes to allow and encourage these efforts. Please work to remove their code violations and update our city regulations.

Thank you,  
Sarah Romans  
938 Watson Ave  
St Paul, MN 55102

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**From:** Marcey Mastbaum <marceymastbaum@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 6:53 AM  
**To:** \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Cc:** gov.contact@state.mn.us  
**Subject:** Minnesota Acre Farms

To all of our council members,

This letter is in regard to your voting on the code violation of Minnesota Acre Farms this October 21st, 2020.

I am begging you to understand that this is NOT a code violation concerning storage containers. This is a farm. This is a groups' living. This is a small business that we can all benefit from now and in the future.

I am trying to understand why you would vote on this to begin with...denying one's right to make a living.

I urge you to go past what it appears to be, and see/understand what it really is. Go take a look at what is inside.

It is for us. It is for our community. It is someone's living that will benefit us all.

We listen to your words that you are trying to restart our economy. This is how.

Please pay attention to your actions in denying this farm's right to exist.

Marcey Mastbaum

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From: MARY SENG <besteseng@msn.com>  
Sent: Saturday, October 17, 2020 9:24 AM  
To: \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
Subject: Mn Acres Farm

To whom it may concern:

Hydroponic farming makes sense in the world we live in today. It provides jobs, sustainable agriculture and fresh greens close to home. Don't get caught up in red tape regarding the "container" for Mn Acres Farm. Consider it a sustainable business option so badly needed during this time of Covid 19.

I urge you to vote in favor of the business.

Sincerely,

Mary Beste Seng

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**From:** Caroline Lohmann <ctlhazel@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 2:21 PM  
**To:** \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Subject:** Oct. 21 Hearing on Mac-Grove Hydroponic Container.

Dear Council Members:

I recently read an article in the Highland Villager concerning a hydroponic growing container in my neighborhood, the fate of which will be determined by you on October 21. I am also following a thread on the Nextdoor neighborhood forum, where close to 40 people have responded positively, as I have, about the benefits of such a business in our neighborhood.

I found the Facebook page for the business, Minnesota Acre Farms, and am impressed with and intrigued by their business model. The business owners detail the prospects and benefits of their growing operation that will bring urban agriculture to St. Paul for the first time! Their innovative technology provides produce that is pesticide-free, herbicide-free and soil-free, grown in an eco-friendly manner that uses minimal electricity and water. More importantly, this business can operate 365 days a year, producing the equivalent of a 4-acre farm. This sounds like a win-win for the city of St. Paul!

I am a recently retired, lifelong resident of Highland Park, and I would love to have a business like this within walking distance of my home. That I could get freshly grown produce just hours after it is picked, even in the dead of winter, is exciting and appealing to me! I would certainly support this agricultural business, but that appears to be the issue -- the Legislative hearing officer has stated that the issue "is not how the container is used" as it is regulated the same way as a storage container. It sounds like an agricultural business to me, not merely a "storage container"!

Many of you, along with our Mayor, campaigned on and frequently tout your efforts to bring new, innovative businesses to St. Paul. Why then would you put up roadblocks to that exact business model? I strongly urge all of you to reverse the decision of the legislative hearing office and bring this business to our city. As one of the posters on Nextdoor stated, "this is the future" -- I couldn't agree more.

Sincerely,

Caroline Lohmann  
Highland Park

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**From:** Phyllis Calph <pcalph@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 3:54 PM  
**To:** \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Subject:** Mac - Grove hydroponic container

Please let this container stay where it is. The good it will do for the community far outweighs the appearance. The Minnesota Acre Farms, LLC will do so much to make our community a better place to live.

Why don't you all do something good and decent. I vote to let it stay. Please

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**From:** Anna Williams <alouisew@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 4:59 PM  
**To:** \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Subject:** Please change the code to allow green agriculture within the city of St Paul

Dear St Paul city council members,

I am a Mac-Groveland resident, and I am writing to urge you to ratify the city code to allow larger-scale sustainable farming in storage containers ("Greenery" systems) within St Paul city limits. I was thrilled to learn about Minnesota Acre Farms, LLC, a local and sustainable ~2 acre farm that has the ability to provide produce that is pesticide and herbicide free throughout the entire year. This will help to reduce carbon emissions by cutting out the cross-country travel that is usually required for us to have fresh food much of the year. This

is a dream come true for someone who lives in Minnesota and is gravely concerned about climate change.

It's time to bring our city into the future, and make sure that we are doing everything that we can to combat climate change while also providing our residents with quality food 365 days a year. We need to embrace innovative technologies, like these "Greenery" systems, and update our city laws and codes to reflect the changes we need to keep both our community and the world healthy.

Thank you for your time,  
Anna Williams  
1809 Jefferson Ave  
St Paul, MN 55105

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**From:** Wendy Harter <wjharter@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 5:44 PM  
**To:** \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Subject:** Minnesota Acre Farms, LLC

To: St Paul City Council Members

I am writing to express my support for the new small business, MN Acre Farms. I feel that their business will benefit the community. The container type unit which houses this business is located on a commercial lot, and it is a nice, clean looking unit. The City should approve this business based on its operations, not based on the unit it's housed in looking like a storage container.

Please approve MN Acre Farms to continue operating their hydroponic farming business out of the existing unit located on Snelling Ave.

Regards,

Wendy Harter  
2029 Upper Saint Dennis Rd  
St Paul, MN 55116