

September 21, 2012

City of St. Paul,  
Department of Safety and Inspections  
375 Jackson Street, Suite 220  
St. Paul, MN 55101-1806

Attn: Corinne A. Tilley

RE: File #12-101937 (Raymond & Susan Cantu)  
Approval of relocation of gas pups at 1200 Rice Street

I'm writing in objection to this approval.

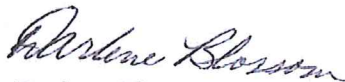
When we were first told of the plans, it involved tearing down and rebuilding the entire building and we were presented with grand designs. Now, it has deteriorated down to only sliding the pumps over. What a disappointment. I can't see how traffic can safely exit this business without safety issues, now that Maryland Avenue is widened.

The owner did make some cosmetic improvements like paint, and hanging up an American Flag on his building, but past experience dictates the property will soon return to the previous state of shoddiness.

Vents on the roof emit odors which drift to my house since westerly winds usually prevail and I suffered these obnoxious smells all summer long.

I've lived in my house since 1966 and it is sad, disappointing and disheartening to see this corner go so far downhill.

Thank you,



Darlene Blossom  
1189 Park Street  
St. Paul, MN 55117  
Home: 651-488-5943  
Work: 651-294-0723



Ms. Darlene M. Blossom  
1189 Park St.  
Saint Paul, MN 55117



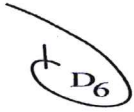
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Department of Safety and Inspections  
Attn: Corinne A. Tilley  
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District 6 Planning Council

171 Front Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55117  
651-488-4485 fax: 651-488-0343  
district6ed@dist6pc.org

September 19, 2012

Zoning Committee of the Planning Committee  
15 West Kellogg BLVD  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

District 6 Planning Council wholeheartedly supports the appeal brought forth by Raymond and Susan Cantu and the neighborhood regarding the approval by zoning staff of 1200 Rice Street, 090127-Reemo Gas Station site plan.

In order to approve a site plan the City must consider and the plan must be consistent with findings set forth in Section 61.400.c.

***Site plan review and approval:*** In order to approve the site plan, the planning commission shall consider and find that the site plan is consistent with:

**The City's adopted comprehensive plan and development of project plans for sub-areas of the City**

This finding has not been satisfied. The site plan does not meet LU5.2 of the District 6 Planning Council Comprehensive Plan:

***Attractive commercial districts***

***LU5.1 Encourage existing auto related businesses to upgrade the appearance of their buildings and properties; discourage the growth of new auto related businesses.***

***LU5.2 Utilize the Rise Street Design Guidelines prepared by the Rice Street Guidelines Task Force in 2005, when existing buildings are renovated and improved***

The site plan does not call for a lighted canopy, the entire lot will not be repaved and any improvements are not consistent with the Rice Street Guidelines. District 6 has not seen any designs for upgrading the exterior visual quality of the building.

**The Land Use Chapter of the City of Saint Paul's Comprehensive Plan:**

**Promote Aesthetics and Development Standards:**

*As Saint Paul continues to revitalize itself and to grow, it must be an attractive place to live, work, and visit. This strategy provides a framework for design and aesthetics that will engage people and help integrate the built environment into the community.*

## **Commerce**

### ***1.45 Maintain and enhance retail commercial areas throughout the city by promoting standards that make them vital and attractive:***

- *Access to a broad range of goods and services;*
- *An anchor for surrounding residential neighborhoods;*
- *Safety for pedestrians; and*
- *Architectural elements that add interest at the street level.*

The applicant has ample opportunity when reconfiguring the site and when implementing improvements to follow elements that make the site interesting and above all ensure that the site plan considers and ensures pedestrian safety.

***1.47 Ensure that streets in compact commercial areas conform to the certain criteria: use of traditional urban building form, streetscape amenities, and traffic calming measures. Traditional urban building form and streetscape amenities should reflect the function of the street and the type of development on it by identifying and promoting the street as the center of a shopping district, no matter how large or small. Streetscape amenities should enhance the visibility of the storefronts or other buildings in the commercial area (see Policy T-3.1).***

Again the applicant has not investigated nor added additional amenities to any site redevelopment that reflects the neighborhood, there will be additional traffic both pedestrian and vehicular and the store is set back from the street due to the configuration of the lot. The redevelopment should reflect an establishment that is inviting and safe.

### **1.53 Encourage changes to the design of existing auto-oriented commercial buildings and areas with elements of traditional urban form to minimize impacts on the pedestrian realm.**

The business includes fuel sales which make it an auto related industry. The site is located on the corner of Rice Street and Maryland Avenue which has a high level of pedestrian traffic. The site plan does not address the impact of the high level of traffic three types of businesses will generate and what the impact on pedestrians will be.

***The arrangement of buildings, uses and facilities of the proposed development in order to assure abutting property and/or its occupants will not be unreasonably affected.***

This finding has not been satisfied. The proposed employee parking will pose a hardship to the adjacent properties, there will be pedestrian foot traffic behind the building and will spill over into abutting properties. The parking spaces are at such an angle that easy access will be difficult. The curb will be removed, ensuring that even a small delineation between the site and alley will be removed. The plan should demonstrate separation of the site to neighboring properties allow easier access.

***Safety and convenience of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic both within the site and in relation to access streets, including traffic circulation features, the locations and design of entrances and exits and parking areas within the site.***

This finding has not been satisfied. The proposed site plan is inconsistent with traffic safety, standard tanker delivery, there will be issues with traffic rotation throughout the site, vying for space to park or wait for available parking spaces, with foot traffic, deli/retail customers and those who wish to purchase fuel. The site is not large enough to accommodate three separate and distinct businesses, fuel, retail and a deli. If cars are parked in any area other than designated parking spots, traffic circulation will not work. There have been past experiences with businesses that patrons do not always park in designated parking areas, therefore causing safety issues.

***Sufficient landscaping, fences, walls and parking necessary to meet the above objectives***

This finding should not have been satisfied. There is a need for additional parking; this is an irregularly shaped 11,831 square foot lot with three businesses operating under one umbrella. The proposed parking is insufficient for the usage. The employee parking should not be assigned to the rear/side of the building.

***Site accessibility in accordance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including parking spaces, passenger loading zones and accessible routes***

This finding has not been satisfied. The route into the store, with the current configuration and parking is unsafe for people with disabilities and limited movement. It is unacceptable that a patron who happens to utilize alternate modes of transportation be required to pass through the traffic flow area.

In conclusion, District 6 Planning Council and the neighborhood have continued concerns regarding safety and the negative impact this site plan has on adjacent properties as well as concerns over traffic and safety. District 6 has cited five findings that have not been met. While the neighborhood and District 6 is of the opinion that the site plan has not met requirements it may be understandable that language is open to interpretation, even text found within the City's Land Use Section of the Comprehensive Plan. However what should not be in dispute is the fact that the approved site plan neglects the very reason why the original site plan was not approved; the relocation of the pumps. In discussions District 6 and neighbors were told that a small tanker will visit the site, not the larger tanker. District 6 is of the opinion that there is no

guarantee that a smaller tanker will deliver fuel and even if a smaller tanker made deliveries, there still would be traffic issues.

We feel that in reviewing site plans the City should take a more cautionary role, this site plan does not meet even the lowest threshold of the referenced criteria. We respectfully ask that you grant the appeal.

Regards,

*Ray Andresen*

Ray Andresen  
Chairman, Board of Director's

*Jeff Martens*

Jeff Martens  
Chairman, Land Use Task Force

Cc: Ward 5  
North End Business Association  
Dan Zangs on behalf of the neighborhood