

From: Scott Burns <Scott.Burns@govdelivery.com>
To: "tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us" <tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Date: 5/8/2012 10:17 PM
Subject: Thank you

Thank you for your thoughtful work recommending approval for the Grand-Finn project. There are many in our City who see the benefits of increased density as we strive to build our tax base and maintain the vibrancy of the City including our world class libraries, parks, and schools.

Thanks again,
-Scott Burns
1411 Summit Avenue

Tom Beach - student apartments at Grand and Finn

From: <tony.nancy@q.com>
To: <tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Date: 4/27/2012 4:41 PM
Subject: student apartments at Grand and Finn

Hello Mr. Beach,

I attended the planning committee's public hearing on April 26 and have several comment/questions about the parking access and staging.

Concerning the parking access: Many people find entering and exiting the alley on Finn easier and safer than using Cretin. The east end of the alley gets a lot of use. Most often people turn left on Finn when exiting the alley to get on Grand. I wonder if having the openings to the underground garage and the alley so close together may provide greater opportunity for accidents. I also do not have a good enough understanding of how the design of the ramp will effect the visibility of cars exiting the ramp and alley at the same time to see each other and anticipate/accommodate accordingly. I do know that cars leaving both the parking garage and the alley should come to a complete stop before crossing the sidewalk, but I also know that many drivers do not fully obey all driving laws.

Also regarding the parking access: I could not tell from the drawings how far away from the alley the ramp is. I am wondering about how it will affect alley snowplowing (this past winter would have been no problem, but let's recall the winter of 2010/11). Will there be adequate room for the snow banks that build up as the snow plow travels down the alley without narrowing the path down the alley? I notice that the drawing shows shrubbery lining the ramp and this shrubbery is a part of Cullen's attempts to shield the neighborhood from its building. I wonder about the survival of these plantings if they are packed into snow banks during the winter and if Cullen will be able to maintain/repair/replace these plantings.

Regarding the staging during construction: As I mentioned before, many people use the east end of the alley to exit. The trailer parked on Finn will greatly limit the ability of drivers to see traffic traveling south on Finn. It would seem that the further the trailer is from the alley opening, the better that visibility will be. Of course, if the trailer gets too close to the crosswalk, it will impair north bound drivers' ability to see and anticipate pedestrians crossing Finn from west to east. It would seem careful consideration of placement is called for. Also, will parking on the east side of Finn be restricted when the trailer is in place? It is already difficult to drive on Finn when cars are parked on both sides of the street, let alone having a trailer there.

Also, it is important to neighbors that the east end of the alley remain open and usable.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nancy Wacker
2153 Lincoln Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
651-690-4869

Tom Beach - Apartment complex at Grand and Finn

From: Justin Revenaugh <justinr@umn.edu>
To: <josh.williams@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Date: 4/26/2012 7:17 AM
Subject: Apartment complex at Grand and Finn

Justin Revenaugh and Kelly MacGregor

2128 Lincoln Avenue

Saint Paul, MN 55105

651-698-3916

justinr@umn.edu; macgregor@macalester.edu

Dear Mr Williams,

We wish to communicate our concerns about the proposed 20-unit student housing development on Grand Avenue at Finn, and our support for making the temporary rental conversion moratorium permanent. As seven-year residents of the neighborhood, we have grown to accept the tradeoffs inherit in living close to a university. We are part of a wonderful community with great neighbors and older housing that has been nicely maintained. There are rentals and duplexes on our street. Most are inhabited by St. Thomas students, most of whom are respectful of the neighborhood. Some are not. We wish that wasn't the case, but know that it comes with the territory.

What concerns us is the drift we've seen toward more and more student occupied housing. In this regard, we strongly support the temporary moratorium on rental conversion in Mac-Groveland. It now appears, however, that there is a second, potentially worse, problem: developers buying adjacent lots and building huge new, student-oriented (if not student only) apartment complexes.

The proposed development on Grand is a shocking example. The developer owns two adjacent properties. In their stead, he would build a 20-unit, five-story structure. We hesitate to call it an apartment building as each unit is four bedrooms, a bath and a small kitchen with no common living space. For all intents and purposes, it's a dorm. A dorm not managed by St Thomas and therefore not subject to any of their rules on noise, drinking, guests, etc.

Many aspects of the proposal are concerning. At five stories, it would be the largest structure in the neighborhood--larger than any of St. Thomas' street-front building

(limited by agreement to four stories). It will be the tallest building on Grand Avenue for several miles. It could introduce as many as 120 new parking permits into the already full streets (most of which would likely be sold to friends who commute to campus as is already the case with most local rentals). The proposal for underground parking--presumably to maximize the number of units that can be squeezed into two city lots--will likely encounter the same groundwater problems previous developments have met. Will the developer be allowed to simply drop the parking altogether in this case? Lastly, what is the relation of this development to St. Thomas? The plans that the developer released to the community explicitly describe the structure as "student housing." Not "apartments" nor even "student apartments," but simply "student housing" suggesting that this truly is a private dormitory.

Beyond the proposal itself is the concern that anytime a developer can manage to purchase adjacent properties another big box "dorm" will be plopped down on the neighborhood.

We don't wish to come across as NIMBYs. We moved into our house fully aware that St. Thomas was a block away, that Grand is mostly apartment buildings and that many students live nearby. But we loved (and continue to love) our house, our neighbors and the physical beauty of living close to the river. We have no plans of moving regardless of what happens with this particular development or any later ones. What we want is for the city to recognize that neighborhoods are not developed by developers. That simply abiding by zoning laws isn't always enough. That what makes St. Paul's multiple campuses attractive is that they are part of their communities. And that if the adjoining communities are allowed to become extensions of a campus, they won't be communities any longer.

Allowing this development to move forth would send the message that Mac-Groveland is the new Marcy-Holmes, that it's time to buy, demolish, build. Who cares if each new development doubles the number of people living on the block? More than doubles the number of cars without garages? Who cares if all sense of community is lost? We do. And we hope you do too.

Please assist us in blocking, or at the least, limiting the scope of this development. We truly believe that what happens with this unit will set the precedent for years to come.

Sincerely Yours,

Justin, Kelly, Emma (age 9) and Silas (age 6)

Tom Beach - File 12-037838 Grand and Finn Apartments

From: Jim Lendway <jimlendway@yahoo.com>
To: "tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us" <tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Date: 4/26/2012 8:02 AM
Subject: File 12-037838 Grand and Finn Apartments

I live at 2111 Lincoln ave which is 1/2 block away from 2124 Grand ave, the proposed site for a new 20 unit apartment buiding.

I am stgrongly opposed to the proposal to build a 20 unit 5 story apartment builkding at that site. There is currently a duplex on that site. A 5 story building would be the tallest buiding on Grand Ave. There is already a proposal for limiting the amount of student housing in the neighborhood and replacing a duplex with a 20 unit building would be contray to that proposal. The city should be doing something to limit the amount of off-campus housing in the neighborhood, not allowing the construction of more off-campus student housing.

From: Alyssa Rebensdorf <alyssa.rebensdorf@gmail.com>
To: <tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Date: 4/26/2012 8:24 AM
Subject: Apartment building on Grand and Finn

Mr. Beach and Members of the Planning Commission:

I am opposed to the scale and height of the proposed apartment building on Grand Avenue and Finn. I am a former member of WSNAC and have spent the past twelve years of my time here on Lincoln Avenue addressing UST/neighborhood planning issues. I was part of the original group of neighbors who gave many hours to shape what is now the Conditional Use Permit governing St. Thomas' development. We worked hard to establish Grand Avenue as the southern boundary of the UST campus, and to create buffers between the university as it transitioned into the neighborhood. We also designated space for UST to build more on campus housing for its students. What we did not envision at the time, and most certainly did not intend, is that UST would claim to have no funds to build additional supervised student housing on its campus property, and private developers would look to the area south of Grand Avenue to build over-scale student housing apartments. Five stories and 80 students to replace two single family homes is a de facto expansion of UST's campus into our neighborhood. We live in an area that is already seeing too many single family homes converted to student rentals. Where there was once a family, there are now four students, four cars, friends parking in the alley on on the street using city issued permits and many, many Friday and Saturday night disturbances. We are, as you know, attempting to address these problems through establishment of a student housing rental ordinance, and proposals like this oversized apartment complex only serve take us further backward.

We are losing families and long term residents as this area slowly but surely becomes a student housing mecca. Please do not permit an apartment project of this scale. Please do not place 80 additional unsupervised 19-22 year olds in our midst. We ask you to help us protect the balance and promote the long term stability and viability of this residential neighborhood for ALL users.

Thank you.

Alyssa Rebensdorf
2096 Lincoln Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Tom Beach - Grand and Finn Apartment Building

From: <jcmjohnson@comcast.net>
To: tom beach <tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Date: 4/25/2012 9:26 PM
Subject: Grand and Finn Apartment Building
Attachments: 064.JPG

Dear Planning Commission:

Jeff and I have lived at 2165 Lincoln Ave close to ten years. We bought our house from my grandparents after they lived in this house for over 60 years. They owned a local grocery store at the corner of Lincoln and Grand (which is now a chiropractic office). I have wonderful memories of visiting my grandparents in this neighborhood as well as making memories with my own family.

We have great concerns about another apartment building being built on Grand. One of my first concerns is greater density in an area where traffic is already a concern with 3 small children. Our alley way becomes a race track of activity as people try to bypass the traffic on the streets. My second concern is parking. We live directly behind 3 apartment buildings and often those residents are parked on our street as we share the same parking permit area. It is frustrating to not be able to unload your groceries in front of your own house. We had to build a fence to control the apartment residents from walking through our yard to cut down on the distance back to their buildings. We have additional parking issues during St. Thomas softball games as players and fans do not park in the parking ramp and end up in front of our house. We call parking control, but the response times can be long so offenders are not always caught.

These inconveniences are a challenge that is driving us away from a house that we love and we have decades of family memories in. Even more than the inconveniences, the overbuilding of this apartment building is concerning. The City has imposed restrictions on other developments including St. Thomas, but this development seems to break those restrictions. Five stories is just too tall for an apartment building. It would dwarf the houses around it and even the St. Thomas buildings close by. The building must be smaller if it is allowed.

The focus of this apartment building as student housing causes challenges with increased student activity in the heart of our neighborhood. We have endured a huge increase in rental housing in our neighborhood since we moved in ten years ago. We have seen groups of students "roam" from parties at night as well as seen many more students living in homes meant for families (we have 6 students that live next door to us). I understand that the developer of this apartment building is intending to market this to professionals and maybe even families, however a 4 bedroom unit with no living space is not for anyone but students. This type of building that resembles a "dorm" does not belong in a family neighborhood.

I have attached a picture that I took of our house on a morning this earlier in the week. Most of the cars shown in this picture are from the apartment buildings behind us. Where are 40 additional cars going to park?? This is an objective picture showing those in attendance at this meeting that our neighborhood has reached and surpassed its density.

Sincerely,
Christine Johnson

