

FILE
19-026900

From: Patrick Summers [<mailto:patricksummers@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2019 10:01 PM
To: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul) <jerome.benner.ii@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Support for 2150 Grand Ave Variance request 19-26900

Mr. Benner,

I reside at 2144 Fairmount Avenue with my family. I am a life long Saint Paul resident. I support this variance. The plans look consistent with the City's plans to increase density and rental opportunities near transit and existing apartments. That section of Grand is largely apartment buildings. This property contains a single family home sandwiched between two apartment buildings. I have no connection with the developer seeking this variance. I learned recently of this project, and it seems like a good idea.

Patrick Summers
651-690-3961

19-026900

Crippen, Debbie (CI-StPaul)

From: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:33 AM
To: Crippen, Debbie (CI-StPaul)
Subject: FW: 19-026900 Variance for 2150 Grand Ave

From: Justin Revenaugh [mailto:justinr@umn.edu]
Sent: Saturday, April 13, 2019 3:47 PM
To: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul) <jerome.benner.ii@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: 19-026900 Variance for 2150 Grand Ave

Dear Mr. Benner,

I write in strong opposition to the variance request for 2150 Grand Avenue. As a resident of the 2100 block of Lincoln Avenue (one block south of Grand), this request would directly affect me and my family. Since moving to this neighborhood 13 years ago, I've seen multiple single-family and duplex homes get bought up and converted to three new four and five-story apartment buildings. The result has been much greater density, which I'm not against, but many (MANY) more cars that are not accommodated on the new properties, which I am against. As a result, my street is almost always parked up with cars owned by student renters from Grand. I realize that living on a street affords you no ownership of parking spots on the street. But I'm concerned that addition of yet another unit that certainly won't have sufficient garage space will result in yet more cars competing for scarce spots on the parked-up adjacent blocks.

Secondly, the addition of yet another large unit on an already crowded street is certain to create greater alleyway traffic and noise. Given the lot size, I'm certain there will also be a large loss of permeable surface area, resulting in more storm water runoff.

Then there is the nature of the variance request itself. The lot is only 2/3s the size required for the intended unit. As a private homeowner, if I attempted to build an accessory unit that left as little open space on my lot as the plan for 2150 Grand, I'd be laughed out of the Safety and Inspections office. 2150 Grand should be too.

Every new property on the 2100 block of Grand built in the last decade has required variances. What is the point of having zoning laws if they're routinely ignored? And what assurance do they provide owners, prospective and established, if they are never enforced?

Sincerely,
Justin Revenaugh
2128 Lincoln Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105

--
Professor
Earth Sciences
University of Minnesota

John T. Tate Hall, Room 150
116 Church Street St
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0231

From: Flannery Delaney <flannerydelaney@hotmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 20, 2019 10:14 PM
To: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul)
Subject: against variance at 2150 Grand

FILE
19-026900

Dear Mr. Benner,

Please consider denying the variance at 2150 Grand Avenue. The development of private dorms that cater to college students does not meet the city's needs for more affordable housing. Student density can not be what the city is aiming for. These private dorms are disruptive to our residential neighborhood and are degrading our quality of life. The footprint of the proposed building is too big for so many reasons. We need mixed use housing, a student dominated block isn't good for St. Paul. Please deny the variance and maintain some housing balance on Grand avenue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Flannery Delaney
2126 Linclon Avenue

From: Kelly MacGregor [<mailto:macgregor@macalester.edu>]
Sent: Monday, April 22, 2019 8:45 AM
To: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul) <jerome.benner.ii@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: opposition to Major Variance Request File #19-026900

FILE
19-026900

Dear Members of the Zoning Board:

My family and I live at 2128 Lincoln Ave, St Paul, MN 55105, and we would be significantly impacted by this variance, AS WE ALREADY HAVE BY ZONING VARIANCES GRANTED ON THIS BLOCK OF GRAND AVENUE.

I am OPPOSED to the variance request for the following reasons.

- 1) The proposal request states that each unit has just 2 bedrooms. However, when you look closely at the plan, it is clear that there are 4 rooms with one closet each. In practice this building will have 16 inhabitants, as is the custom in all new construction on this part of Grand Avenue that caters to St. Thomas college students Their variance request states that they will provide affordable housing. In fact, the rents around this construction are \$900 person/month. There is no reason to believe that these builders would intentionally offer a lower rent than the going rate in their immediate vicinity. They could easily charge \$3600 per unit, which is not considered affordable by any definition and is even less affordable than what they are currently offering.
- 3) Parking is a perennial issue, particularly when 16 occupants move into a lot currently holding 4 people. When one considers the actual levels of car ownership for St Thomas students (the target market for the builders), it is not extreme to predict that these occupants will own 16 cars. Offering 6 parking spots is far too few, pushing 10 cars into a neighborhood already crowded with student cars. This does not lessen congestion or comply with city code. It is particularly challenging during winters where one side of the street is closed to parking.
- 4) Moreover, this construction as described in the plan has 4 units where each unit has 2 bedrooms, 2 sitting rooms, and 1 living room for a total of 5 rooms as defined by city ordinance 63.207. *This construction is not compliant with the parking ordinance, regardless of how many rooms are legal bedrooms and how many rooms are sitting rooms that just happen to house another person.*
- 5) This building is requesting extreme variances: The request states that the footprint for the new building is "nearly" the same. In reality, the original is 32x24 (768 sq ft) and the new building is 52x22 (1,144). *This is a 49% increase in footprint.*
- 6) The second way they are requesting a variance is just as extreme: A four unit building currently requires that the lot be 9,000 sq feet per city ordinance.
- 7) Remember that approving this variance will open the door to approving similar variances for any and all single home lots in this area. Between Cretin and Cleveland alone, that would mean a possible similar conversion of 9 more homes, bringing 108 more residents and 90 more cars to the streets.
- 8) This construction would pave over nearly the entire lot. This would increase storm runoff into the infrastructure, seriously taxing an already precarious system during significant rain events. *It would go against St. Paul's plans for resiliency in a changing climate.*

I am not opposed to increasing density but I do feel that it needs to be done in a sensible, and sustainable manner. Doubling the density of units on this lot is more than adequate. I am sure you will see the logic of these arguments and DENY THE VARIANCE.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Contact me with questions at 651-698-3916 or macgregor@macalester.edu.

Sincerely, Kelly MacGregor

Dr. Kelly MacGregor
Geology Department
651-696-6441 | macgregor@macalester.edu
1600 Grand Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105 USA

20 April 2019

FILE
19-026900

LeAnn Taylor
2122 Lincoln Ave
St Paul MN 55105

Re: Major Variance Request File #19-026900

Dear Members of the Zoning Board:

I am a resident of the neighborhood that would be impacted by construction on the property located at 2150 Grand Ave.

I am OPPOSED to the variance request for the following reasons.

- 1) The proposal request states that each unit has just 2 bedrooms. However, when you look closely at the plan, it is clear that there are 4 rooms with one closet each. In practice this building will have 16 inhabitants, as is the custom in all new construction in the area.
- 2) Their variance request states that they will provide affordable housing. In fact, the rents around this construction are \$900 person/month. There is no reason to believe that these builders would intentionally offer a lower rent than the going rate in their immediate vicinity. They could easily charge \$3600 per unit, which is not considered affordable by any definition and is even less affordable than what they are currently offering.
- 3) Parking is a perennial issue, particularly when 16 occupants move into a lot currently holding 4 people. When one considers the actual levels of car ownership for St Thomas students (the target market for the builders), it is not extreme to predict that these occupants will own 16 cars. Offering 6 parking spots is far too few, pushing 10 cars into a neighborhood already crowded with student cars. This does not lessen congestion or comply with city code 60.103. It is particularly challenging during winters where one side of the street is closed to parking.
- 4) Moreover, this construction as described in the plan has 4 units where each unit has 2 bedrooms, 2 sitting rooms, and 1 living room for a total of 5 rooms as defined by city ordinance 63.207 (see the website https://library.municode.com/mn/st._paul/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIILECO_TITVII_ZOCO_CH63ZOCOEGGEAP_ARTII63.200.PARE_S63.207PAREUS). In this case, each unit requires 2 parking spaces, 8 parking spots total. *This construction is not compliant with the parking ordinance, regardless of how many rooms are legal bedrooms and how many rooms are sitting rooms that just happen to house another person.*
- 5) This building is requesting extreme variances: The request states that the footprint for the new building is "nearly" the same. In reality, the original is 32x24 (768 sq ft) and the new building is 52x22 (1,144). *This is a 49% increase in footprint.* This is by no means nearly the same footprint and when combined with the paved parking area will radically change the nature of this lot.

Basic math recognizes that they are mis-representing themselves to say it is similar to current layouts.

- 6) The second way they are requesting a variance is just as extreme: A four unit building currently requires that the lot be 9,000 sq feet per city ordinance Sec. 66.231. This lot is just 6,388 sq ft. *They are asking the city to ignore a deficit of 29%. It is an egregious request!*
- 7) Remember that approving this variance will open the door to approving similar variances for any and all single home lots in this area. Between Cretin and Cleveland alone, that would mean a possible similar conversion of 9 more homes, bringing 108 more residents and 90 more cars to the streets.
- 8) One cannot deny that the design of the building is rather depressing with long flat walls and a paucity of windows. It looks like communist era construction on the east and west sides. Bringing this kind of ugliness does not maintain neighborhood feel and has the reverse effect of decreasing the charm of the neighborhood, reducing property values nearby and converting grand into student ghetto.
- 9) This construction would pave over nearly the entire lot. This would increase storm runoff into the infrastructure, seriously taxing an already precarious system during significant rain events. *It would go against St. Paul's plans for resiliency in a changing climate.*
- 10) Finally, the builders claim that a duplex would not be appealing to renters. This is clearly not the case as this house and all other duplexes in the area are consistently occupied. This lot would easily accommodate a duplex, *doubling the population density of the lot*, while at the same time complying with all of the ordinances already in place. There is no need to change anything. *The easiest and best solution is to BUILD A DUPLEX.*

I am not opposed to increasing density but I do feel that it needs to be done in a sensible, and sustainable manner. Doubling the density of units on this lot is more than adequate. I am sure you will see the logic of these arguments and DENY THE VARIANCE.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Contact me with questions at 651-260-9688 or taylorleann@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,

LeAnn Taylor

Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul)

FILE
19-026900

From: Kelly MacGregor <macgregor@macalester.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2019 11:10 AM
To: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul)
Subject: do not support the two variances at 2150 Grand Avenue

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Hello -

I live at 2128 Lincoln Ave, St Paul, MN 55105, and am writing to request that you deny the two variance requests at 2150 Grand Avenue.

We live one block to the south, and can tell you that since the apartment buildings have gone up on Grand, the parking on our block is a NIGHTMARE during the academic year (it is fine in the summer, as students are not on campus and appear to not be living in these 'off campus dorms'). Not only is it difficult to find a place to park on our street, but during snow emergencies and street sweeping there are ALWAYS many cars that are not moved, creating huge problems. I called the City several times this winter because my children's bus couldn't get down the street because so many cars had not been moved during snow emergencies at Finn and Lincoln and snowbanks made it impassable. In addition, students drive and park in the evenings and talk and yell loudly as they go from cars to their apartments. Cars speed out of the alley onto Finn and Cretin, and I've almost been hit walking my dog many times. Adding additional student housing and more cars is going to turn our block into more of a nightmare.

I am not opposed to increasing density along Grand, but we absolutely do not need more housing for students (with no closets, tiny bedrooms, all 4-person dorm style). Affordable housing for families would be great (many fewer vehicles)! What about walkable businesses on the first floor? St. Thomas is building more dorms on campus, and I really do not think we need more of the same housing stock on this block.

Thank you for your consideration of our living conditions on Lincoln Avenue.

best wishes - Kelly

--
Dr. Kelly MacGregor
Geology Department
651-696-6441 | macgregor@macalester.edu
1600 Grand Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105 USA



I will be on sabbatical 2018-19 and slow to respond to emails

From: Justin Revenaugh [mailto:justinr@umn.edu]
Sent: Monday, May 13, 2019 10:44 AM
To: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul) <jerome.benner.ii@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Re: 2150 Grand Ave Parking Variance

FILE
19-026900

Dear Jerome,

I still do wish to oppose this project.

Thank you,
Justin Revenaugh

On Mon, May 13, 2019 at 10:34 AM Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul) <jerome.benner.ii@ci.stpaul.mn.us> wrote:
Hi Justin,

Thank you for your comments.

To be clear, the required number of off-street parking spaces for this property is seven and the proposed site plan shows seven spaces on the property. There is no variance for the number of parking spaces.

The variance is to allow smaller setbacks on the rear along the alley and the side yard next to the detached garage on the abutting property.

Do you still wish to oppose this application? I want to make sure that you are clear on what is being requested by the BZA.

Thank you!

Jerome



Jerome Benner II
Zoning Inspector
Department of Safety and Inspections
375 Jackson Street, Suite 220
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1806
P: 651-266-9080

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jerome.benner.ii@ci.stpaul.mn.us

From: Justin Revenaugh [mailto:justinr@umn.edu]
Sent: Saturday, May 11, 2019 9:11 AM
To: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul) <jerome.benner.ii@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: 2150 Grand Ave Parking Variance

Dear Jerome,

Dear Mr. Benner,

I write in strong opposition to the parking-spot variance request for 2150 Grand Avenue. As a resident of the 2100 block of Lincoln Avenue (one block south of Grand), this request would directly affect me and my family. Since moving to this neighborhood 13 years ago, I've seen multiple single-family and duplex homes get bought up and converted to three new four and five-story apartment buildings. The result has been much

greater density, which I'm not against, but many (MANY) more cars that are not accommodated on the new properties, which I am against. I realize that living on a street affords you no control of parking spots on that street. But in a neighborhood that is already oversubscribed by the cars and trucks overflowing the large rental units on Grand and St. Thomas students and staff parking on the streets rather than UST's pay lot, we really shouldn't be asked to absorb still more cars to accommodate construction of a unit that requires variances both for sheer size and for parking.

Every new property on the 2100 block of Grand built in the last decade has required variances. What is the point of having zoning laws if they're routinely ignored? And what assurance do they provide owners, prospective and established, if they are never enforced? Every variance granted becomes an expectation for the next development.

Sincerely,
Justin Revenaugh
2128 Lincoln Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
Professor
Earth Sciences
University of Minnesota
John T. Tate Hall, Room 150
116 Church Street St
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0231
Professor
Earth Sciences
University of Minnesota
John T. Tate Hall, Room 150
116 Church Street St
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0231

From: Riley Kane [mailto:riley.kane@mono-1.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2019 10:06 AM
To: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul) <jerome.benner.ii@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Re: Grand Ave. St. Paul Apartments Variance

FILE

19-026900

Sure i'd be happy to have my comments read by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

I live at 2149 Fairmount Ave, and have been living in this neighborhood for 18 years.

Thanks,
Riley

On Wed, Apr 17, 2019 at 9:25 AM Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul) <jerome.benner.ii@ci.stpaul.mn.us> wrote:

Thank you for your comments, Riley.

If you would like your comments to be read by the Board of Zoning Appeals it is required that you disclose your address. If you would like to chat about the project I'd be more than happy to address your concerns over the phone.

Let me know what works for you.

Thanks, and have a great day.

Jerome
Jerome Benner II
jerome.benner.ii@ci.stpaul.mn.us
Zoning Inspector
Department of Safety and Inspections
375 Jackson Street, Suite 220
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1806
P: 651-266-9080

From: Riley Kane [mailto:riley.kane@mono-1.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2019 7:22 PM
To: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul) <jerome.benner.ii@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Grand Ave. St. Paul Apartments Variance

Hi Jerome,

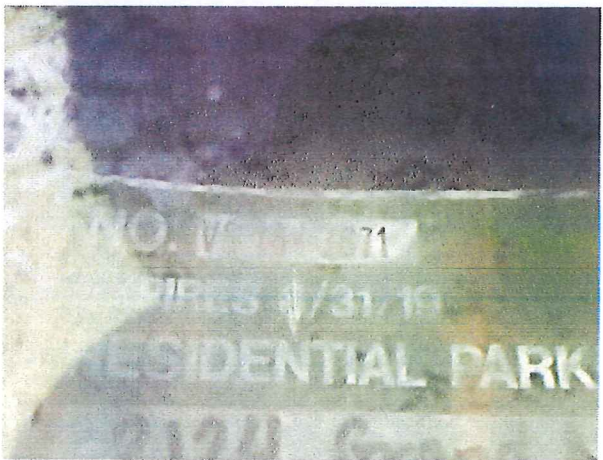
Just curious why the developer needs a variance to build a much bigger apartment building (which will be UST student housing) than is allowed right now. I know it's inevitable that there will be a UST-filled apartment building there, but these developers just want to go bigger and bigger with them.

I continue to watch that area of Grand Ave. become an extension of UST campus. I think it's unfair to the families in the surrounding area that have invested in homes and don't want to stare at another monolith student building.

Thank you, I appreciate you reading this.

Thanks,

Riley Kane **RILEY KANE** Creative **MONO** 612.454.4900 Main **MONO-1.COM**



2094 GRAND



2118 GRAND

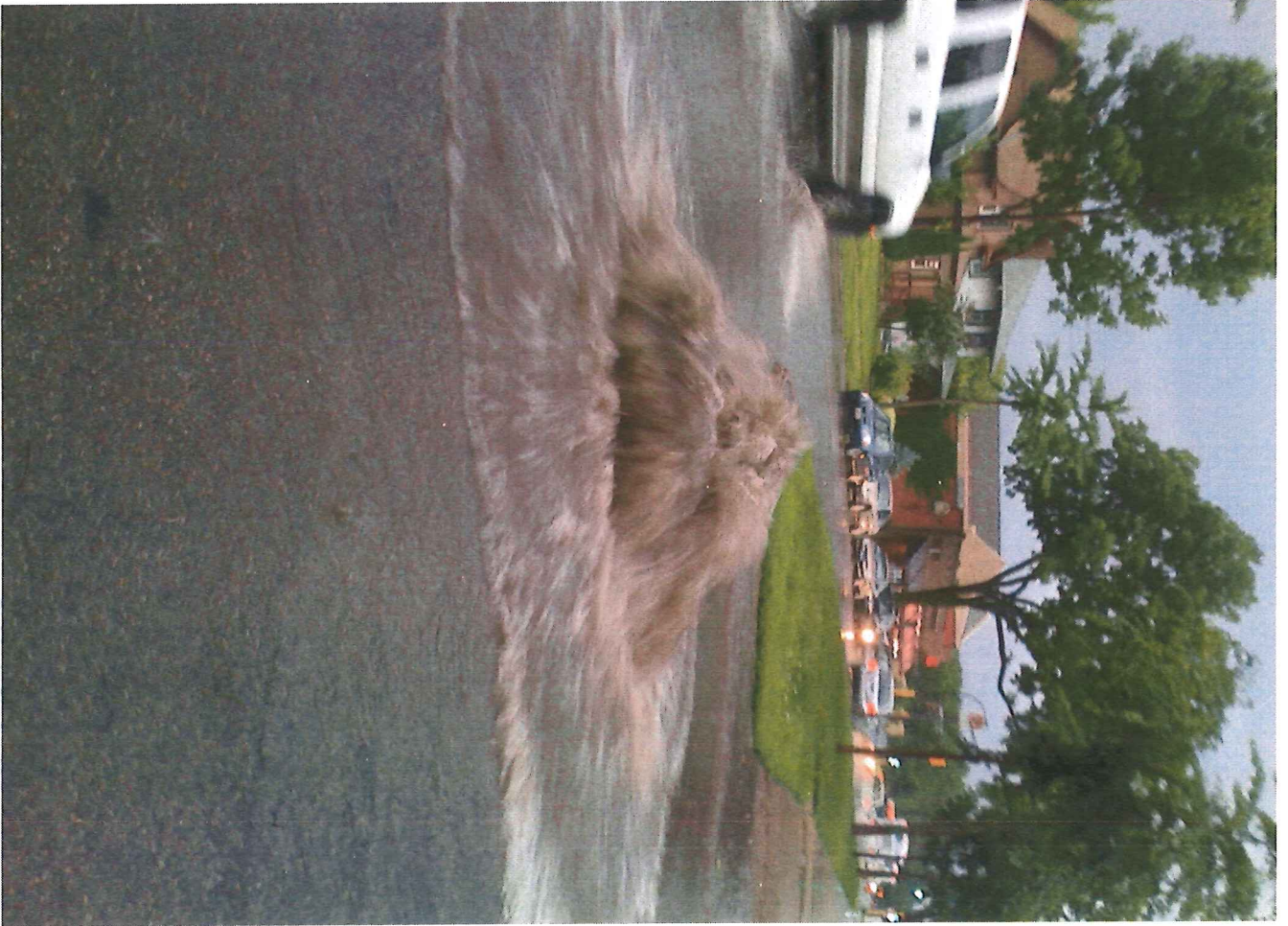


ST. THOMAS PARKING PERMITS



2124 GRAND ÷ 1970 PORTLAND





FILE
19-026900

FILE
19-026900



Crippen, Debbie (CI-StPaul)

From: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2019 2:53 PM
To: Kathryn McGuire
Cc: Crippen, Debbie (CI-StPaul)
Subject: RE: 2150 Grand Avenue



Hi Kathryn,

Thank you for resubmitting your comments.

They will be made a part of the record.

Jerome



Jerome Benner II

Zoning Inspector

Department of Safety and Inspections

375 Jackson Street, Suite 220

Saint Paul, MN 55101-1806

P: 651-266-9080

jerome.benner.ii@ci.stpaul.mn.us

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From: Kathryn McGuire [mailto:m McGuire.kathy56@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2019 2:07 PM
To: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul) <jerome.benner.ii@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Re: 2150 Grand Avenue

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Dear Jerome,

I have attached my original letter which now includes an addendum to address the change in the variance request. Please verify that you have received my letter, that it will be forwarded to the Zoning Board, and that it will be included in the public record.

Sincerely,

Kathryn McGuire

35

> On May 14, 2019, at 8:50 AM, Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul) <jerome.benner.ii@ci.stpaul.mn.us> wrote:
>
> Good Morning Kathryn,
>
> The BZA ruled that staff erred in determining the number of bedrooms in the units. Yes, the public hearing has been reopened and he is requesting variances for setbacks for the parking. The proposed development will meet the number of required off-street parking spaces.
>
> Jerome
>
> -----Original Message-----
> From: Kathryn McGuire [<mailto:mcguire.kathy56@gmail.com>]
> Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2019 8:03 AM
> To: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul) <jerome.benner.ii@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
> Subject: 2150 Grand Avenue
>
> Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.
>
>
> Good Morning Jerome,
>
> I see that Mr. Schwartzman has now come clean on the number of tenants he truthfully intends to house in his proposed fourplex at 2150 Grand Avenue. Now that his intentions are more transparent and the variance request has changed, will public input be reopened?
>
> Kathy McGuire

3,6

Please Deny The Variances

- The variances are NOT in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code.
 - Do not encourage a compatible mix of land uses, that reflect the scale, character and urban design of Saint Paul's existing traditional neighborhoods.
 - It isn't compatible. There isn't enough space to support the building and vehicles for the property.
 - Does not provide housing choice and affordability.
 - \$3,600 for a 1,500 sq. ft. apartment is NOT affordable
 - Already four large apartment buildings offering student housing on the block, and many more in the neighborhood.
 - There is already enough student housing in the neighborhood.
 - Mac Groveland needs AFFORDABLE housing.
 - Does not reduce congestion. There will be 16 cars with this building. It only provides 7 spaces.
 - Will cause more congestion on Lincoln Ave. and Grand Ave., not less.
 - These two streets are already very congested and parking is already an issue.
- The applicant has NOT established that there are practical difficulties in complying with the provision, that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the provision. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.
 - The existing house is very usable.
 - The proposed use is NOT reasonable.
 - The lot is too small for the amount of parking and for the size of the building.
 - No place to put snow, garbage and recycling bins.
 - The use will negatively impact other property owners nearby.
 - This is purely economic.
 - Could avoid asking for multiple variances by building smaller.
 - Could keep house as is and continue making money.
- The plight of the landowner is NOT due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.
 - There is no plight to the landowner.
 - The buildings next to it do not prevent it from being used as a single-family dwelling.