

Shari Moore - Fwd: Proposed Relaxation of Off-Street Parking Requirements

From: Merritt Clapp-Smith
To: Moore, Shari
Date: 5/16/2012 4:03 PM
Subject: Fwd: Proposed Relaxation of Off-Street Parking Requirements

>>> <lbrostrom@comcast.net> 5/16/2012 3:56 PM >>>

Dear Ms. Clapp-Smith;

I am writing in advance of tonight's public hearing, which I will be unable to attend, to register my great concern about the proposal to relax off-street parking regulations for restaurants and bars in the City of St. Paul. As a resident who lives one block off Grand Avenue, I can attest to the congestion already faced under the current regulations and it is unimaginable what would happen if those would be relaxed. The statement in the Pioneer Press article by the Planning Commission is somewhat disingenuous, in my opinion and experience:

The letter states that having restaurant-goers spill into adjacent streets and park in a residential area is "typically not a nuisance" by day, but "overflow of patrons onto neighborhood streets can create a problem if the overflow occurs late at night or involves patrons who may be loud or behave inappropriately, which more commonly occurs after people have been drinking."

The "overflow of patrons" starts at rush hour--as residents are getting home and trying to find parking for themselves, and patrons are going to local restaurants and bars for happy hour and dinner. It continues until 1 to 2 am on weekends and somewhat earlier during the week, but that is not always the case for restaurants offering entertainment or promotions. The competition for parking is already intense, and it should not be the residents in these areas that shoulder the burden. Providing adequate parking is a cost of doing business for these establishments, not an entitlement.

I'm one of the neighbors who has fought hard over the years to keep parking regulations in our area from being watered down. I was very unhappy with the way the imbroglio around Cupcake was handled by the Mayor's office, given Mayor Coleman's familiarity with the long-standing issues on Grand Avenue surrounding parking. It demonstrated a fundamental disrespect for the concerns of those of us who are paying increasingly higher property taxes in an area that simply does not have enough parking, period. This proposal will only exacerbate an already difficult set of circumstances--and drive more demand for permit parking zones, which I don't think anyone wants.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Lori Brostrom
710 Summit Avenue