

FILE
16 067184

Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)

From: Cynthia Truitt Lynch <Cynthiatruittlynch@msn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2017 3:59 PM
To: Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)
Subject: BZA variance request-Linwood school

Dear Mr. Westenhofer,

St Paul Public Schools has put forth a variance application. In order to grant the two variance requests, the proposal by the school needs to meet many of the criteria espoused by St. Paul. No doubt you are already familiar with these, and I have listed the most relevant ones to this application below.

While I am in full agreement and applaud the school's plan to add a cafeteria, comply with ADA, add a heating system and generally upgrade and modernize the building, something that should have been done and could have been done already, the plans still shows a clear reduction of outdoor space, which does not meet the Minnesota Department of Education guidelines for playgrounds. Expanding the building at the expense of an undersized lot gives up land needed for the well being of the school children.

Additionally, this proposal is in direction opposition to the Summit Hill plan, which destroys a natural amenity and does not reflect the mass and scale of nearby buildings. This proposal degrades community/institutional partnerships. Furthermore this variance request **does not treat Linwood students equitably.**

Diminishing outdoor space means less large-scale play opportunities. It reduces large motor skill running activities, and takes away precious possibilities where children may be boisterous, yelling in jubilation over a child-developed game. This winter I observed the happy squeals of Linwood students rolling giant snowballs across an open field unencumbered. The current revised plan does not give these young students room to do any of these things. This cannot be done on playground equipment, and the Youth sport court being proposed does not meet the criteria of the fourth grade students they wish to add to the school with the large out of scale building addition. I enjoy having a school across the street from where I live. I benefit from hearing their happy squeals at recess and at other times of the day, but these children also deserve a school that's outdoor facilities are right sized for the population and size of the children.

Please, consider that the success of a school requires the commitment of quality educators, updated buildings, but *also* the over-looked hidden classroom of green space. The great outdoors allows children the ability to weave their imagination without regard to noise or mess often restricted in a classroom. It gives adults the freedom to sit and chat with children in an unstructured way, and allows for observation of peer-to-peer conversation and negotiation. I sincerely ask the BZA to reflect on what is lost if the building expands beyond current code requirements. Outdoor green space is a classroom unto itself. Success of our children does not just happen within a building; it is hinged on providing exceptional open space too.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Cynthia Truitt Lynch

448

Tim Lynch

Neighbors in the community

CRITERIA 1- "The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code." CRITERIA 3 – "The applicant has established that there are practical difficulties in complying with the provision and 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." CRITERIA 4 – "The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner." CRITERIA 6 - The variance will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area.

FILE
16-067184

Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)

From: Emily McMahon <emilynooney@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 10:53 AM
To: Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Re: Linwood school expansion - zoning variance request - opposition

Hello,

I am writing a second time to again oppose the variance request. The Linwood (on Osceola) school site is too small for the proposed expansion. The modifications to the plan are cosmetic at best and in my opinion manipulative of the green space.

I am sure there are standards for indoor and outdoor space per child, while we do reside in an urban environment, we should not pretend we are as space constrained as NY or SF.

Please oppose this variance request and ensure the children in this district have well planned and well built indoor and outdoor space.

Thank you,

Emily McMahon
(510) 866-8536

On Jun 8, 2016, at 1:17 PM, EMily Nooney <emilynooney@yahoo.com> wrote:

Hello,

I am a parent of a child who will be starting at Randolph Heights in the fall. I am also a neighbor of the Linwood School. I request that the zoning variance request for the proposed Linwood Lower school (Osceola Avenue) be denied

The current and future students of Linwood School (in any form) deserve more. They deserve a fully ADA compliant school building with sufficient indoor and outdoor space for the number of children. The indoor space should be comfortable and designed for the appropriate usage and number of students. The outdoor space should also be comfortable and designed for the appropriate usage and number of children. The children of an Arts magnet deserve to have indoor facilities to perform and practice. They also need to have outdoor space to perform and practice.

I have not had time to delve deep into the details of this expansion plan but as a parent and neighbor hearing that the outdoor space will be reduced saddens me. When I happen by the school on a normal day the school children use and fill the current outdoor space, to reduce it would be a mistake that can't be undone.

Thank you for serving the public and please consider denying the variance and ensuring that the SPPS provides all children with access to high quality environments.

Emily McMahon, parent of future SPPS children
Osceola Avenue

451

FILE
16-067184

Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)

From: D & K MCMANUS <dmcmanu@msn.com>
Sent: Friday, February 10, 2017 8:43 AM
To: Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Linwood School

Sir,

My name is David C McManus. My wife Kathleen and I have lived at 1004 Fairmount Ave. in St Paul since June of 1980. We are currently out of town and unable to attend the meeting regarding the requested variances submitted by the St Paul School District but wanted you to be aware of our views on this matter. We are opposed to both requests. Our neighbor, John Gehan, has sent you an extensive list of reasons why he is against these variances and we are in agreement with his arguments so I will not repeat them. I will reiterate however, that we are in no way opposed to the improvement of facilities at Linwood School, it is only the overly large scale that the School District wishes to implement on this small site. We are not rich selfish people seeking to deny equal education to the underprivileged as some School District surrogates have implied. We are merely citizens of a St Paul neighborhood seeking to retain its character.

We would appreciate it greatly if you could share this email with other members of the Board of Zoning Appeals and whoever else you may think appropriate.

Thank You for you attention to this matter.

Dave and Kathy McManus
1004 Fairmount Ave.
St Paul MN 55105
Home 651-297-9279
Cell 651-274-1708

Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)

From: Melissa Nonnemacher <nonn0004@mac.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2017 8:58 PM
To: Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Linwood School variances

To the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals,

My family and I moved into the Summit Hill neighborhood, right next door to the Linwood school, a little over three years ago. We chose this neighborhood for what we hope will be our "forever home" because our house and the neighborhood have a rich history and a great community. The green space/playground area of the school also attracted our attention as we have a small child and we noticed lots of children playing there.

We discovered that the green space area is not only a draw to those on the block, but to people from many blocks around and it provides an important place for our community to gather on evenings and weekends and every day in the summer. It is where we meet our neighbors and strengthen our community bonds. We have lived in other neighborhoods in the Twin Cities and this is the only one that has a community gathering space and because of this, the only neighborhood where we know or at least recognize most of our neighbors.

The Linwood school building has been host to four different programs since opening its doors in 1922. Linwood Arts Plus was moved into the building in 1995, despite Saint Paul Public Schools knowing that there was no separate gym and cafeteria and knowing that the building wasn't fully ADA accessible or compliant. As an example, SPPS has made no efforts to bring the bathrooms up to the ADA requirements in the 22 years that they have occupied the building. Things like changes to bathrooms to make them accessible are done all of the time without requiring large additions to buildings. HVAC systems can be replaced and classrooms can be remodeled to meet changing educational standards. The neighbors have had no part in blocking any interior updates to the school, rather SPPS had chosen, instead, not to make them a priority. The major variances are being asked for because SPPS wants to move additional grades to the site, and this requires an out of scale addition. By moving additional grades to the school, beyond what the school site can accommodate, it does not meet the zoning criteria, especially "*The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.*" The site isn't the problem. The "plight" of SPPS has been created by SPPS, rather than it being a problem with the site.

I support upgrades to the school for the population size (K-3rd) currently using the Linwood school. All of these updates can be performed within the existing building and with a small addition to the school, that doesn't require variances, so more of this much needed green play space for the students and the neighborhood children can be preserved. I oppose the two major variances of 1) lot coverage and 2) building height needed to construct an oversized addition to Linwood that SPPS is requesting to accommodate additional grades. As the city code criteria for the variances have not been met, I ask that you reject the variance requests.

Thank you,

Melissa Nonnemacher
1010 Fairmount Ave
St Paul, MN 55105

FILE
16-067184

Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)

From: Brian Uhlhorn <buhlhorn@mac.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2017 8:51 PM
To: Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)
Cc: #CI-StPaul_Ward2
Subject: Linwood school variances

To the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals,

I am a neighbor to the Linwood school (1023 Osceola) and am concerned about the out-of-scale expansion that the Saint Paul Public Schools wants to build on the smallest public school site in St. Paul (it sits on less than half of my block). The fact that the expansion would require major variances of height and lot coverage indicates that the addition is too large for the site. I would ask that the members of the BZA actually visit to see the site that the school sits on, how small the green space already is, and how close the school is to the neighbors. A building that requires variances will have a great impact on the neighbors and the greatly reduced green space will negatively affect the students and the neighborhood children, who all rely on this space everyday to play.

As I understand it, the BZA makes decisions on variance requests based on the city zoning codes. I do not believe that the criteria of the zoning codes have been met by SPPS and therefore, the variance requests should be rejected.

-SPPS wants to increase the enrollment at the site, which is one of the main reasons behind the proposed large-scale expansion. SPPS is creating the "plight" by including more grade levels than are currently at the site. There is nothing problematic about the site itself, as it has successfully been a school site for almost 100 years.

-All of the buildings in our neighborhood are required by code to match the same building height and lot coverage restrictions. The proposed tall, out of scale addition is not "in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning code". A building that exceeds the height and lot coverage restrictions will not only tower over and shade neighbors and change the character of the neighborhood, but with the proposed student enrollment increase, the land will be overcrowded and the area will be more congested.

I support upgrades, and a possible smaller scale addition that wouldn't require variances, for the Linwood school and the current population size (K-3rd). I oppose the two major variances of 1) lot coverage and 2) building height needed to construct a large addition to Linwood Elementary School. As the city zoning code criteria for the variances have not been met by SPPS, I ask that you reject the variance requests.

Thank you,

Brian Uhlhorn

454

1010 Fairmount Ave
St. Paul, MN 55105

FILE
16-067184

Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)

From: Val DiEuliis <valdieuliis@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2017 6:30 PM
To: Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Linwood School: Opposition to the Proposed Variances
Attachments: Satellite images of area schools.pdf

February 9, 2017

Mr. Sean Westenhofer
City of Saint Paul

Dear Mr. Westenhofer:

My name is Val DiEuliis and I urge you to recommend that the BZA deny the variances requested by the SPPS for its proposed expansion of Linwood School at 1023 Osceola Avenue.

I live at 1033 Fairmount Avenue, across the street to the North from the Linwood playground. I have been a neighbor of the school since 1979. For 37 years I have watched multiple generations of children of all colors, religions, and ages, playing, shouting, running, and just plain having fun on the playground. When school is in session, the whole playground is often filled in spring, fall, and even winter, with students during their recesses and other structured physical activity classes. Kids are kids, and we in the neighborhood are happy to have all of them here. At other times, this open contiguous play open space at the north side of the school is used by people from all over the neighborhood and beyond. I have watched multiple generations of parents with their families enjoying the playground at all times throughout the year. It is not unusual for a large extended family to gather on the baseball field for a softball or soccer game, or for a father and mother to teach their children how to throw, catch, hit, shoot, kick, or ride a bike, or a host of other fun and useful skills.

This useful, open, contiguous play space provides two useful public services to our city, district, and neighborhood: adequate outdoor space for the current student population of the school, and a public open space, a park, for the citizens of our neighborhood and beyond. If the variances requested by the SPPS are approved and the proposed building built, this open space will be cut in half, and that lost space will be gone forever. How crowded will that new smaller play space be when the students are outside playing on half the area they now enjoy and fill up? It doesn't seem fair to deny the students the opportunity to run and play in adequate open outdoor space.

The Linwood School's lot size is the smallest lot of all the elementary schools in Saint Paul. It's open outdoor play space is also already very small compared to the other surrounding schools in the area. To illustrate this, I have attached a document that contains satellite images of various public schools in Saint Paul so that you may see how small Linwood's lot and play area are when compared to others, including Monroe.

The SPPS has not proven that it meets all six criteria required to justify a variance by the BZA. We as a neighborhood have submitted documents and other testimony that shows that at least 4 of the 6 criteria are not met. The Summit Hill Association agrees. I want to focus on one of these criteria that the SPPS is required to demonstrate: *the plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.*

First, the SPPS is attempting to justify its purported need for these two specific variances based on requirements that are driven by the policy decision to move the 4th grade from Monroe to Linwood, and to add Pre-K to Linwood. In other words, SPPS wants to increase the population of the Linwood School, which sits on

456

the smallest elementary school site in Saint Paul. SPPS does not cite any defects or deficiencies in the property that must be remedied so that it can provide a school. SPPS simply wants to build a bigger school on a small lot because it wants to move students from Monroe, a campus that spans two city blocks as you can see in the satellite image I have attached to this email. It appears clear to me that SPPS's reliance on its desire to add Pre-K and 4th grade to Linwood is driving its need for these two radical footprint and height variances, and that these reasons fail to satisfy the requirements for a variance.

Second, SPPS cites its need for updating the mechanical systems, upgrading the schools for ADA compliance, and adding a cafeteria as driving their need for these variances. Placing aside the facts that ADA upgrades should have been completed 22 years ago, the mechanical systems have not suddenly become too old or inadequate, and the need for a cafeteria was known even before the gym was added in the not too distant past, these radical variances would not be required to implement these upgrades. A much more modestly-sized building would suffice, and even if a footprint variance would be required it would be much smaller than that currently proposed and the height variance would not be required. Such a reasonable building would still fit in to the character of the neighborhood, and I do not think the neighborhood would object to such a reasonable and modest variance.

Finally, I understand that the issue before all of us is a land use issue. It is not an educational policy issue, nor a racial or social issue, and I can assure you it is not an issue of exclusivity and intolerance by the good people, my friends and neighbors, who live around the Linwood School. We all embrace the school as a part of our neighborhood, and we embrace all of the students and their parents, and the school's staff as our neighbors. We, as a neighborhood, are in favor of improvements at Linwood School and want to work together with the SPPS to find a way to implement these improvements that satisfy both the neighborhood's and the SPPS's needs.

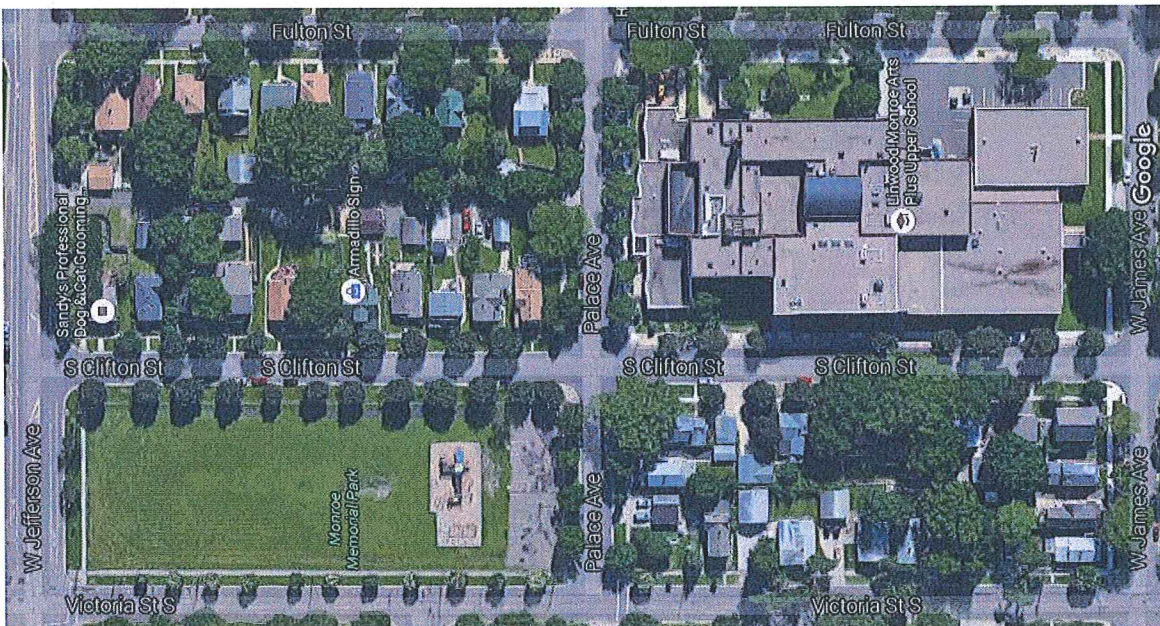
But, the present proposal and the variances it requires is unacceptable to us because it is too big a school on too small a lot, and I urge you and the BZA to deny these variances.

Thank you,

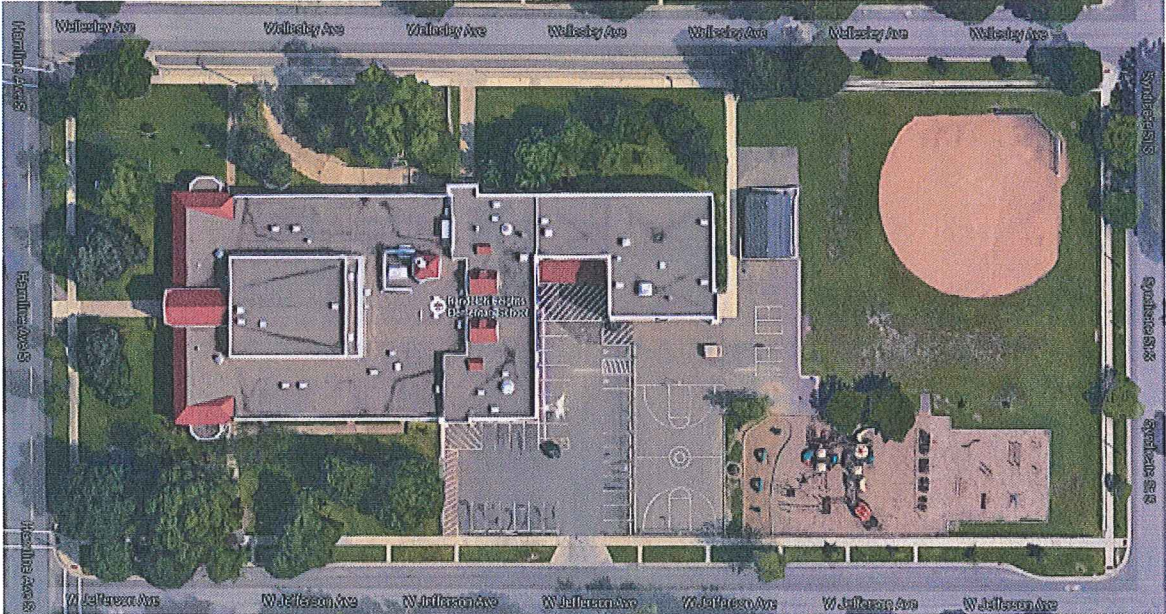
Val DiEuliis
1033 Fairmount Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
651-297-8674



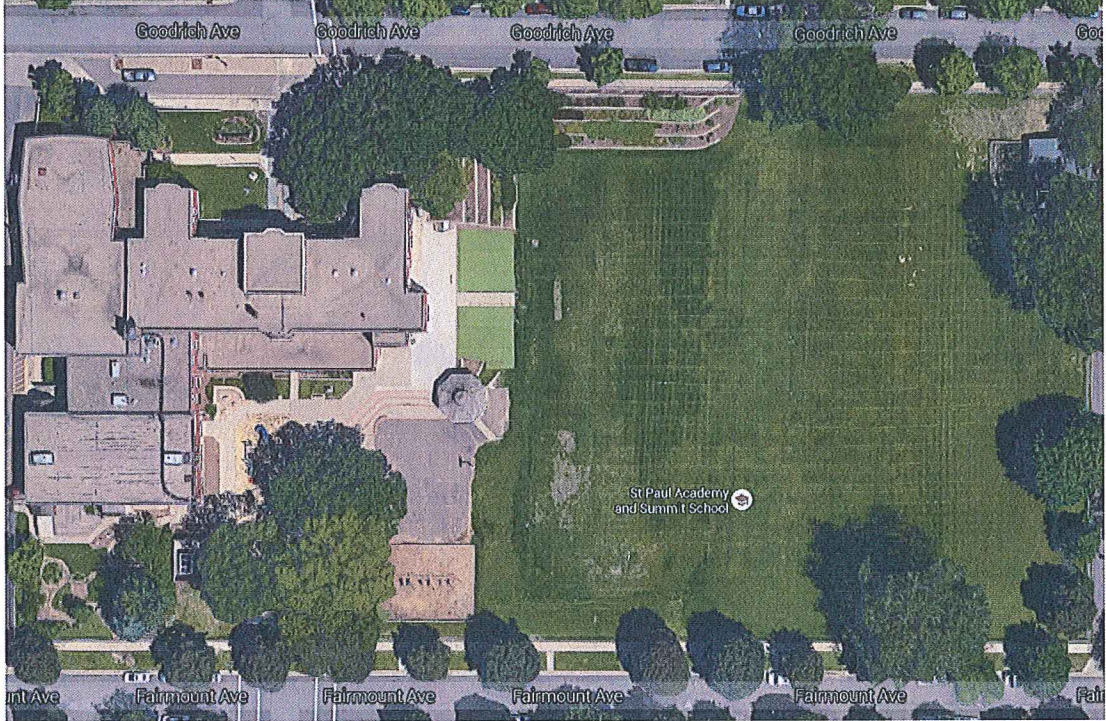
Linwood (picture is full block; school site is approximately 1/3rd of a block; open space play area is less than 1/6th block; the proposed addition will reduce the open space play area to less than 1/10th of a block)



Monroe (picture is four blocks; Monroe school is one block; open space play area is full block)



Randolph Heights (picture is a full block; school fills full block; open space play area approximately 1/3rd block)



Saint Paul Academy (multi-block expanse; open space area multi-block)

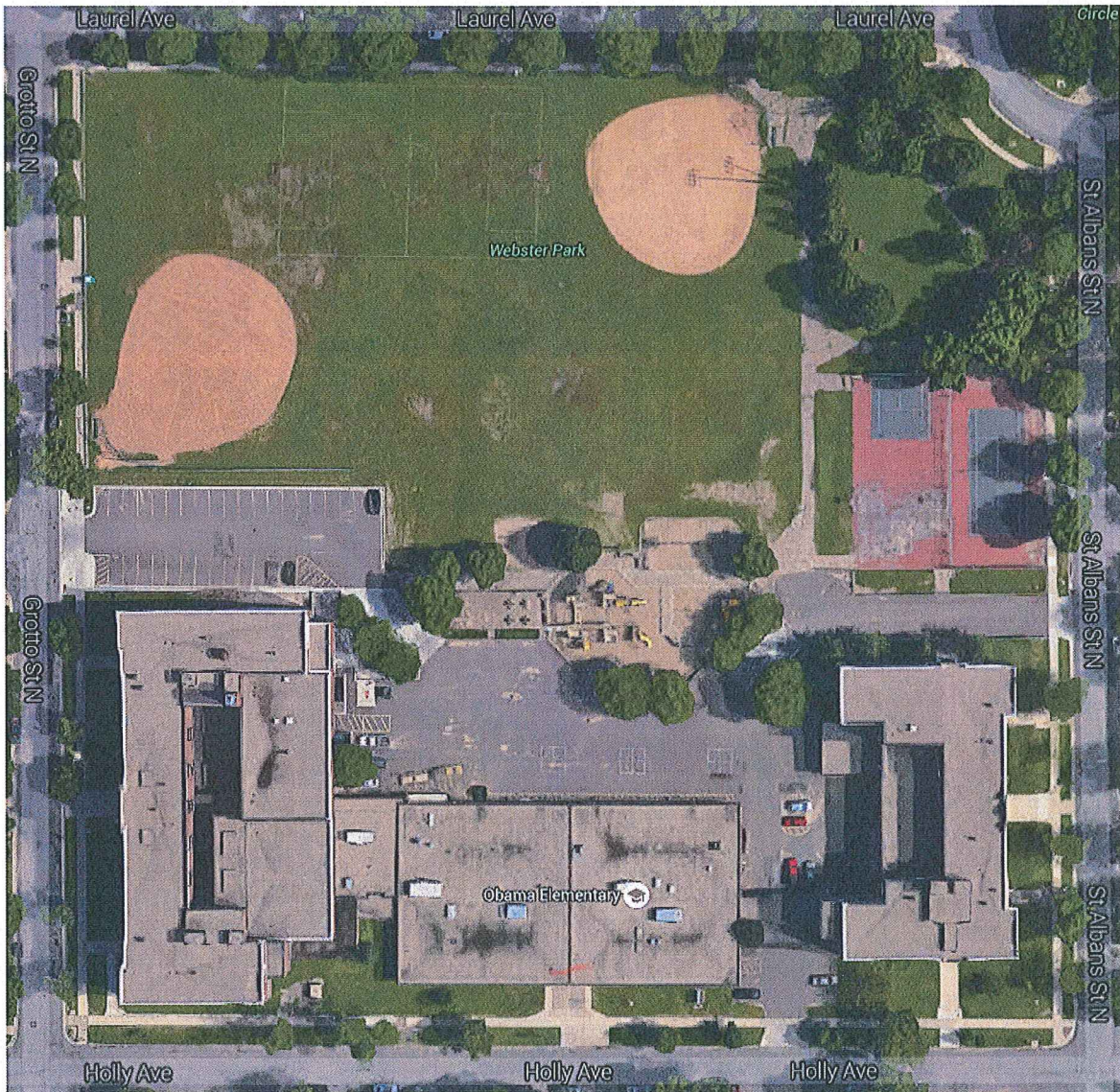
459



Old Riverside - Albion (multi-block triangular shaped lot; open play space takes the majority of the 5.4 acre lot)

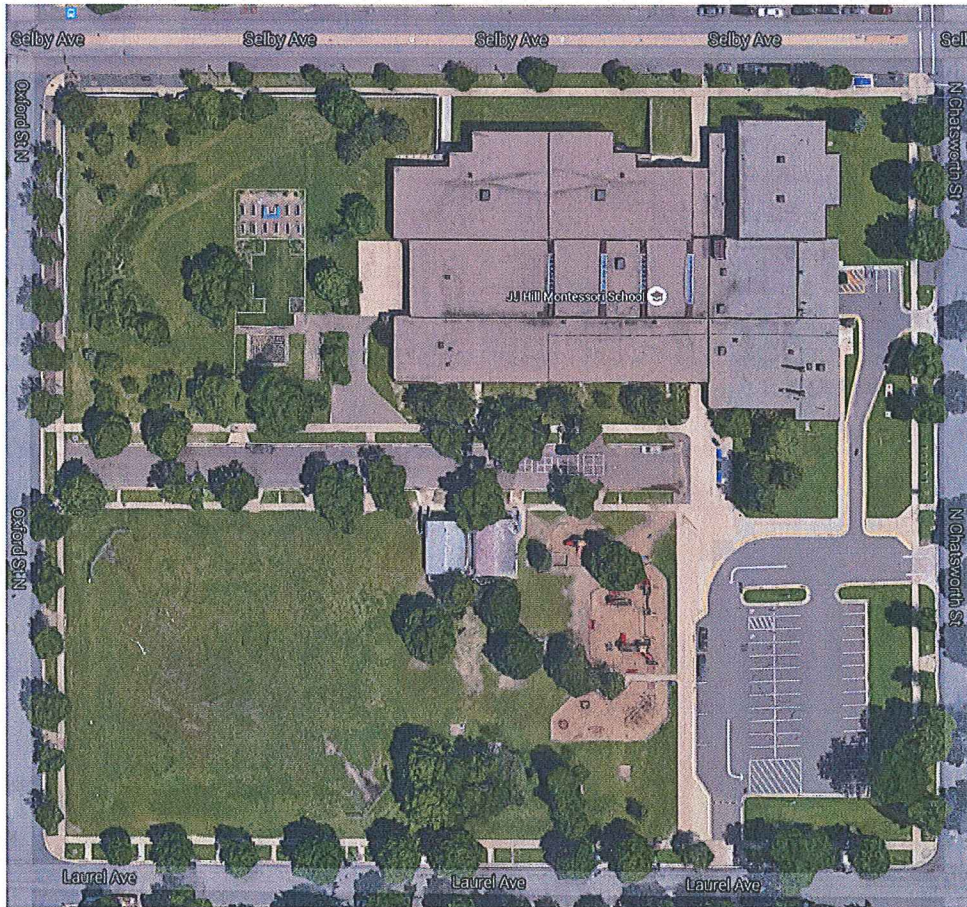


Capitol Hill (multi-block with multi-block open area play space)



Obama Elementary (multi-block; open area play space a majority of the lot)

461



JJ Hill Montessori (two full blocks; 1-1.5 block is open area play space)



Maxfield Elementary (two full blocks; 1 full block of open area play space)

462

Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)

From: Lynn DiEuliis <lynzio@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2017 4:29 PM
To: Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Linwood School

Hello Sean,

My name is Lynn DiEuliis. I live at 1033 Fairmount Avenue, across the street from the Linwood playground. As a neighbor of Linwood for the past 30 years, I have seen many children run into the school with short little legs and just a few years later, stride out with much more grown-up, confident legs. They come in all shapes and sizes and colors and as a woman and wife with no children, I enjoy seeing those children year in and year out – and they become, in an odd sort of way, our kids who we watch over and check on many, many times a day.

I love those kids and I love that school.

I was shocked when we first received the variance notice almost a year ago. Shocked that with nearly 1,000 people involved in the 2 year process, not one of us neighbors were invited to participate. Had we been involved and had a voice, I feel confident I would not be writing you this letter opposing the 2 variances.

I oppose the them because they don't meet the zoning criteria, especially "(d) *The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.*" I do believe SPPS is creating the circumstance by their plan to add 2 more grade levels to Linwood than it presently has. And aside from criteria "d," the variances are just too big and too tall for our small residential neighborhood.

The playground that our home faces is used every day of the year by both students and neighborhood children and parents alike. It is a neighborhood gathering place that is responsible for much of the strength of our neighborhood because people meet and talk while their kids play there. If this space is cut in half, it will be a huge blow to the school kids and the neighborhood. I see them running around and they use the FULL playground, not the half that will remain if these variances go forward. Once that land is covered by a building, there is no getting it back.

There are many things I do support, including making ADA improvements to the existing building. But, I have to question why SPPS hasn't made those improvements to the school already? The ADA has been on the law books since 1990 and according to a quote I found online, those changes should have been done no later than January of 1995 - that's 22 years late!

"Small school districts may have to make each of their school buildings accessible in order to provide program access. A larger school system should provide for wheelchair access at schools dispersed throughout its service area so that children who use wheelchairs can attend school at locations comparable in convenience to those available to other children. Any needed structural changes must be made as soon as possible, but no later than January 26, 1995." <http://www.pacer.org/> Champion Center: Champions for Children with Disabilities

The school needs a lunch room – no doubt about it. And, the school needs improvements to the HVAC and many other updates. But, those things can be done within the existing school and by building a small addition that doesn't block out the sun for the playground and the surrounding neighbor's homes. We welcome changes to Linwood. We want the school and the children to thrive. But, we also want the neighborhood community to thrive, because isn't that why LMAP wanted to house itself in Linwood to begin with? The neighborhood?

Thank you,

Lynn DiEuliis
1033 Fairmount Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
651-297-8674

Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)

FILE
1/6 007134

From: Ken Schumann <kenschumann01@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2017 6:23 AM
To: Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Linwood Elementary Expansion

To: Sean Westenhofer (sean.westenhofer@ci.stpaul.mn.us)

Hello,

I'm writing in opposition to the proposed Linwood Elementary Expansion. The proposed expansion of the Linwood Elementary school is extreme and is way outside the local code. SPPS proposal will double the size of the existing school essentially building a second school while marginalizing the use of the existing structure. The building height is not just a small percent outside the variance but an almost full 2/3 taller than the regulations.

- It is important that the BZA uphold the codes which are in place to protect the city neighborhoods from commercial, public and even our own over ambitions.
- While a school can be an asset to the neighborhood, it can also have negatively impact. The changes being proposed on this small (1.8 acres) lot will have a negative impact to property owners and property values.
- The shade study shows our home will be in the shadow of the building in the afternoon 3 month of the year. These are the coldest months of the year when we most want the sunlight and will increase the cost for us to heat our homes.
- Building of this size and lot coverage will increase/produce a heat island in summer increasing the cost to cool our homes in summer
- Proposed height will fly roughly 20 feet above the surrounding homes and which is 30 feet higher than the typical 2nd story window if you consider the majority of building the top 10 feet are sloped roof.
- This is not an issue of race and inequality as is being pushed in social media. Saying no to this proposed build is not to say no to an expansion and improvement to the school, just this version. The neighborhood is in support of improvements to the school that fit the size and nature of the lot.

Thank you and I hope the committee gives serious consideration to the impact this massive build will have to the neighborhood and its residence.

Ken Schumann
1021 Fairmount Ave
St. Paul, MN 55105

FILE
16-067184

Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)

From: Natalie Hopfield <njhopfield@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 05, 2016 12:33 PM
To: Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Linwood School Expansion

I am writing as a concerned neighbor to oppose the current Linwood School expansion plan due to the impact on the neighborhood. The site is already very small to have the number of students who currently attend and the expansion would make it even more out of proportion. This is a neighbor school in a residential neighborhood, not a congested urban setting. The traffic at school closing is already a burden for neighbors and this proposal would make the traffic worse. I am in favor of renovating the school to better meet the needs of the students and staff but if a large expansion is needed, then a different location would be better suited.

Thank you for your attention this matter.

Natalie Hopfield
1027 Fairmount Ave
St Paul MN 55105