

check counter



APPLICATION FOR ZONING VARIANCE  
Department of Safety and Inspections  
375 Jackson Street  
Suite 220  
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1806  
General: 651-266-9008  
Fax: (651) 266-9099

Received  
9/22/14

Zoning office use only  
File Number: 1A-332913  
Fee: \$ 815.00  
Tentative Hearing Date: 10/13/14  
Section(s) CG-431  
City agent X. DIATTA

APPLICANT

Name Rafic chehouri Company Gerber jewelers  
Address 945 Grand Avenue  
City St. Paul ST ST Zip 55105 Phone 651-222-8585  
Email Rafic.diamonds@yahoo.com Fax 651-222-6070  
Property Interest of Applicant (owner, contract purchaser, etc) owner  
Name of Owner (if different) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Address / Location 945 Grand Ave  
Legal Description (attach additional sheet if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_  
Lot Size 40X350 Present Zoning BC Present Use Commercial  
Proposed Use Retail Commercial

Variance[s] requested: Setbacks (side & front) & parking

Supporting Information: Supply the necessary information that is applicable to your variance request, provide details regarding the project, and explain why a variance is needed. Duplex/triplex conversions may require a pro forma to be submitted. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Attachments as required:  Site Plan  Attachments  Pro Forma

Applicant's Signature Rafic Chehouri Date 09-22-14

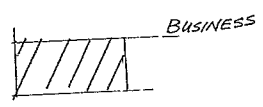
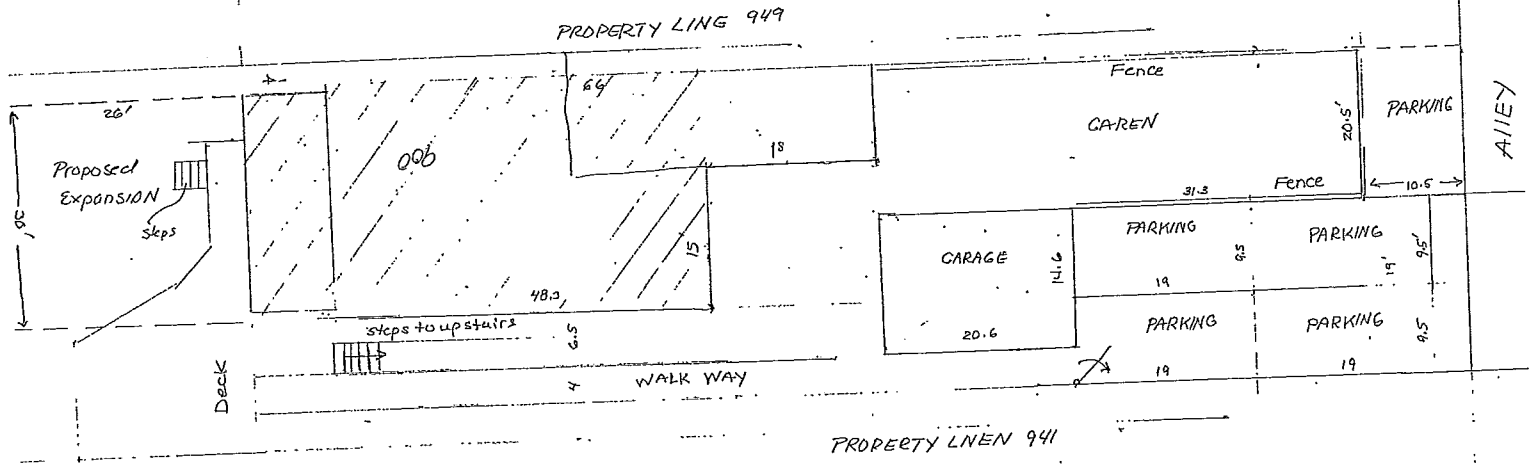
3

945 GRAND AVE.

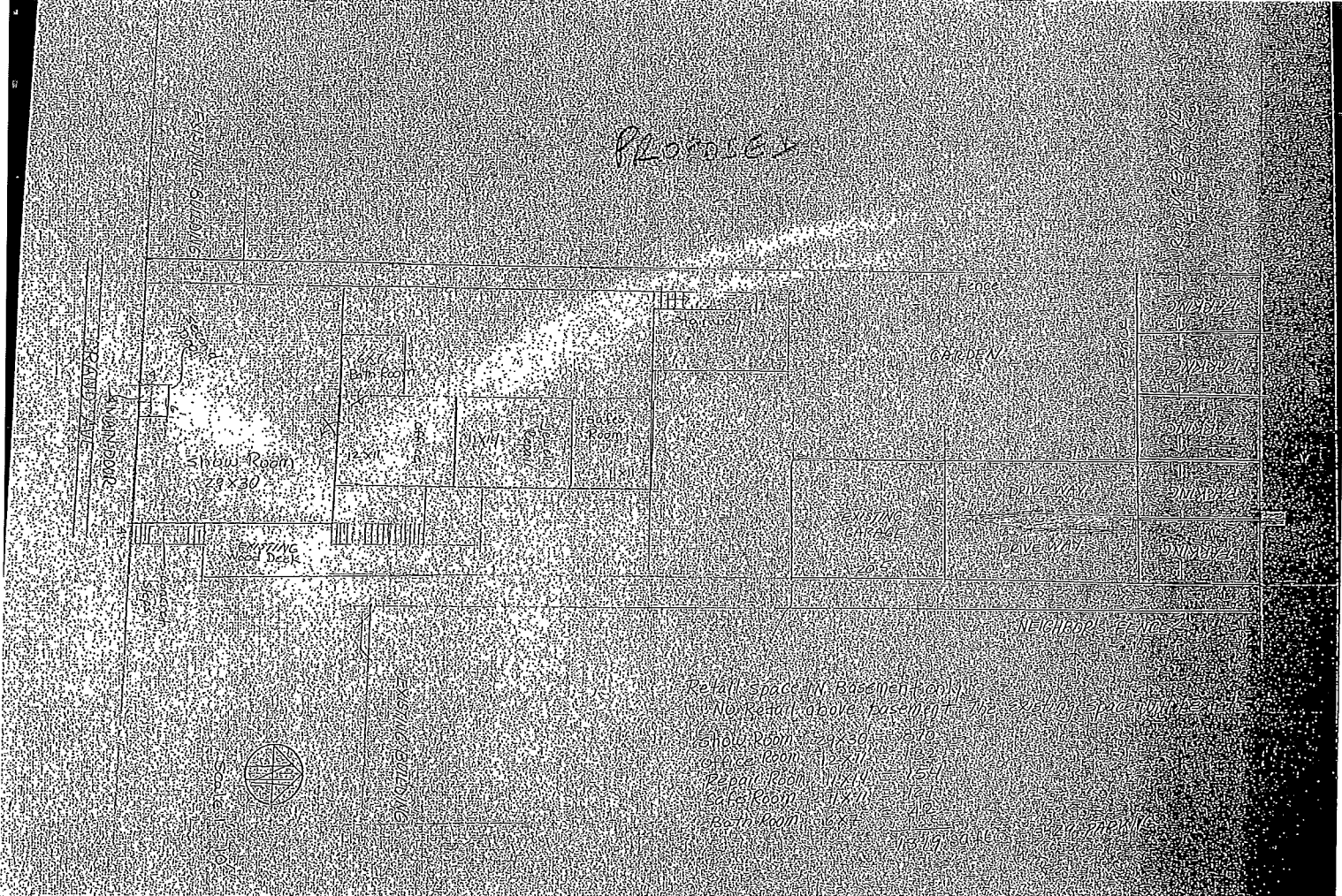
FILE

14-332913

Existing First floor



Proposed



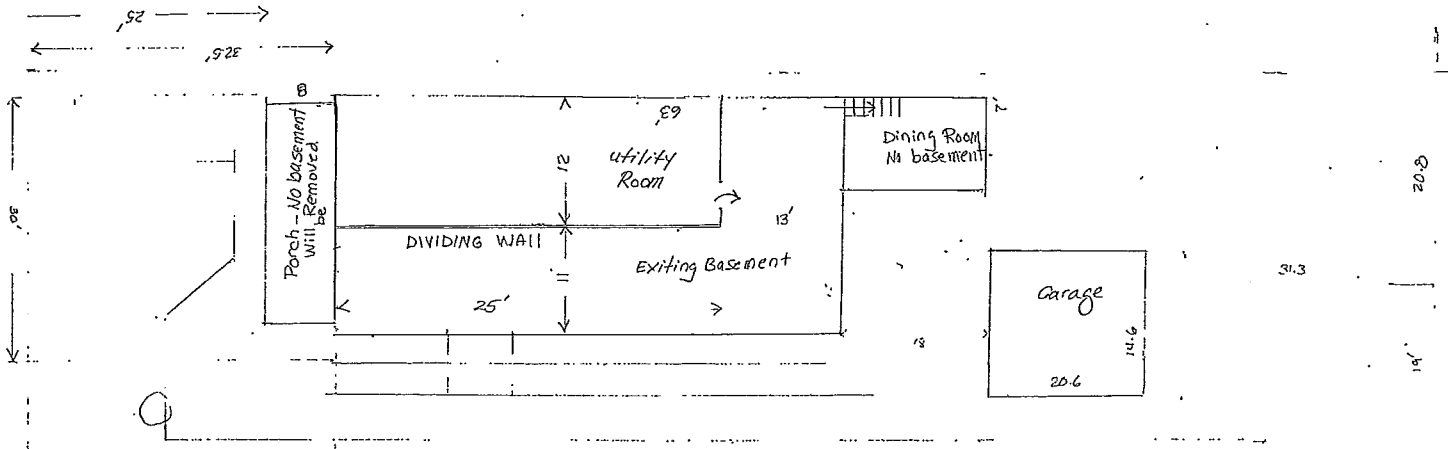
FILE

14-332913

6:  
945 GRAND AVE

FILE

14-332913

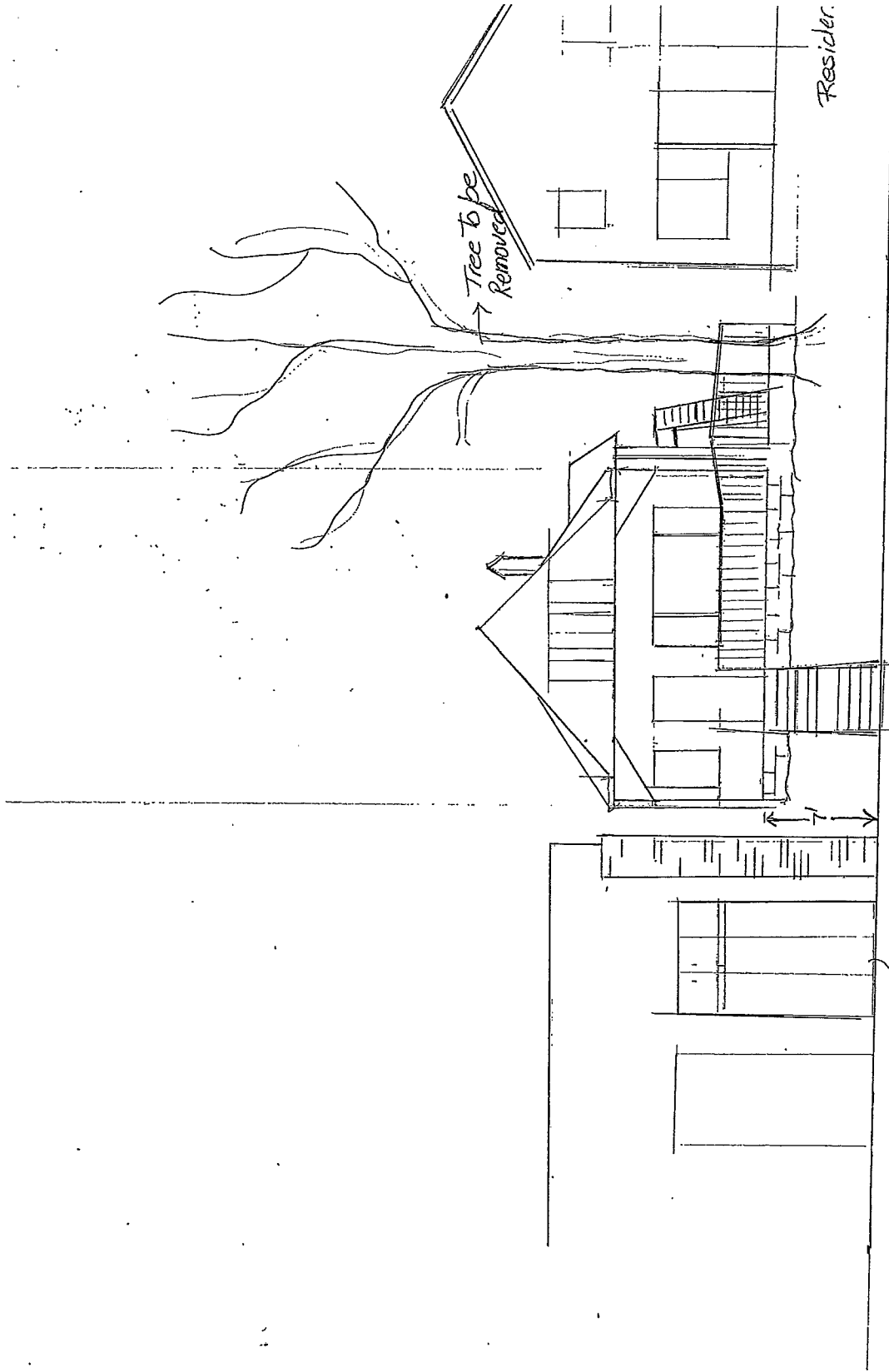


Basement Existing  
 $23 \times 23 = 874$  SQ. FT.

6

**FILE**

14-332913



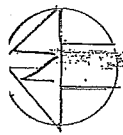
ICE CREAM SHOP

EXISTING PLAN

GRAND AVE

S

7

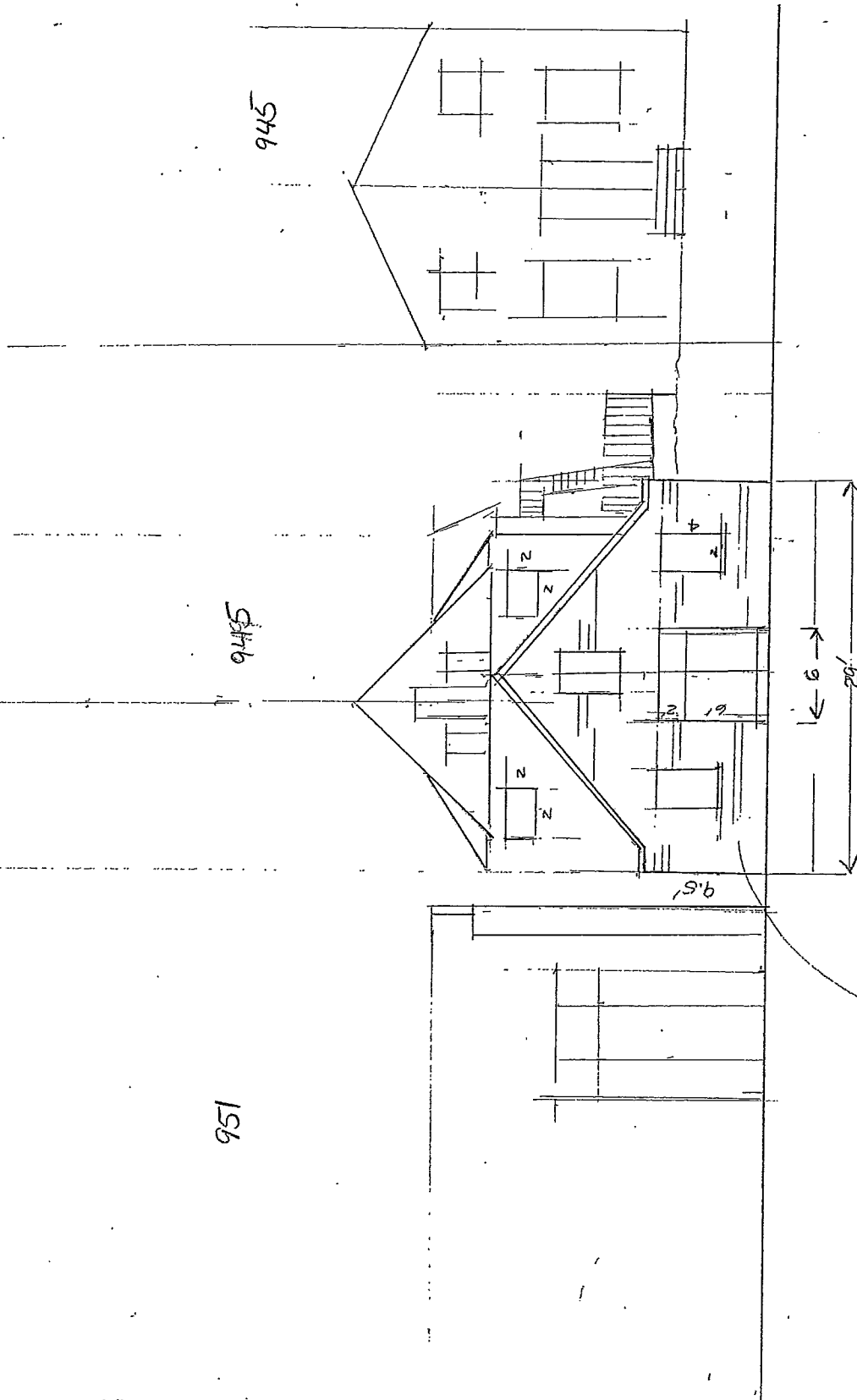


14-332913  
**PLF**

951

945

945



Scale 1" = 10'

945

GRAD AVE.

proposed plan

stone face  
or brick

*[Handwritten signature]*

**FILE**

14-332913

To: The Board of Zoning

From: Rafic Chehouri  
Owner Gerber Jewelers

September 22, 2014

Subject: Zoning Appeal

Dear Board Members,

Gerber Jewelers has been a St. Paul company since 1885. In 1992, we moved to Grand Ave. when the city bought us out of our downtown location. Our current location is not handicapped friendly, especially for the elderly, due to the amount of steps. The building just west of us, 951 Grand, has been given a variance to expand their building to the sidewalk. Lot 961 has also been granted a variance to expand to the sidewalk. Lot 975, which consists of three lots, has expanded to the sidewalk as well. Our need to become handicap friendly and need for better street exposure makes us inclined to ask for this variance. We would like to expand our building up to the sidewalk and down to street level. If we get this variance we feel that our business will increase between 20-25%, which would require us to hire at least three employees, at good pay, from the local community.

Sincerely,  
Rafic Chehouri



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**FILE**

14-332913

Subject: Variance Request

1. The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code because at least 30 percent of our block businesses are next to the property line, and that did not hurt anything. Actually it is an improvement on the block because it will provide interaction between the business and people walking on the sidewalk. Being on the property line will be more handicapped friendly, especially if customers have to climb steps
2. The variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan. A lot of the new businesses on Grand Ave are on the property line. They look nicer and newer. In general, the businesses that are on the property line are doing better than the ones that are further back, especially if they have to climb the steps.
3. We have tremendous difficulty with handicapped that are trying to climb the steps to get to our existing store, especially in the winter time. Many times, elderly customers needed help from someone else to get up to the store. Many times this was the owner. Although our business has handicapped access, the building is not handicapped friendly. Customers prefer to park in the front of the store and come from the front door instead of the back door that has the handicapped ramp. On top of that, our business has been overshadowed by the building just west of us that is on the property line. There are also two huge trees on the east side as well. Customers will often miss our location, even with the correct address.
4. The existing building is about seven to eight feet higher than the sidewalk. This creates tremendous difficulty for elderly. Our proposal will make the store right on the street level and will connect with the basement of the building. That will put us in line with the building just west of us.
5. The variance will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district and will stay the same as it is right now, light commercial retail.
6. The new building will be similar to the existing building in the neighborhood. It will consist of a stone face and stucco on the side. It will also feature a shingle roof.



14-332913

To: Tom Beech

From: Rafic Chehouri

Subject: Business initial expansion plans

Date: 09-16-21

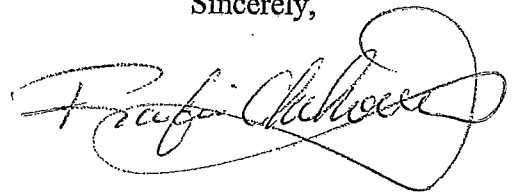
Dear Tom,

Enclosed are the Initial plans for my Gerber Jewelers expansion plans , The scheduled project construction should take place in the early spring assuming everything goes well .

The main purpose of the expansion is to make the facilities more handicap friendly. The existing building sits on a hill and the new building will be on the street level . Another important reason is the need for more space and more street exposure. Also, Summit Hill Association has no objection to the expansion.

Should you have any questions, please give me a call on 651-222-855.

Sincerely,



Rafic Chehouri -Owner

Gerber Jewelers  
945 Grand Ave.  
St. Paul, MN 55105

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RECEIVED

NOV 20 2014

By: City of St Paul DSI

14-332913

November 12, 2014

Board of Zoning Appeals  
Yaya Diatta, Staff  
375 Jackson St. Suite 220  
St. Paul, MN 55101

R: Zoning File Number #14 – 332913

Dear Member of the Board:

In our last hearing on November 11, 2014, I was asked by one of your respected members about the Summit Hill Association letter that was sent to you and CC'd to me. First, I was shocked to hear that there is such a letter. I never received a hard copy or an e-mailed copy. I questioned myself why Mr. Jeff Roy claimed that he CC'd me on this email.

After the meeting, I had a chance to read the letter, and I knew why I was not sent a copy. In the letter, Mr. Jeff Roy made a statement in the meeting, after other member raised his concerns about 949 visually blocking my store and signage, by saying "Mr. Chehouri knew this before purchasing the property". To answer Mr. Roy's statement, my thought was that if they allowed 949 to expand, then they should allow me the same courtesy. If my neighbor's expansion is visually blocking my store, why would my right to expand be declined? Does Mr. Roy fault me in my positive thinking?

In the same letter, Mr. Roy went on to say "The ZLU committee voted a tie (1-1 with one absentee)". He gave the impression that there were only three members voting, and the truth is there were five members total, including Mr. Roy. Not to mention commissioner Vincent said there were three members in the ZLU, and that is not enough to make a decision. The commissioner's comment was made based on a false statement supplied by Mr. Roy. A written apology by Mr. Roy is greatly appreciated.

Previously, the city was talking about the need for seven parking spots, and my building is only three feet higher than the street level. This had to be corrected to four and a half parking spots that is needed, and the elevation of my building is eight feet high.

I feel hurt about all the false statements that are being spread around, and I ask the BZA to stay vigilant and make sure nobody else makes statements they are unsure about.

Sincerely,

Rafic Chehouri  
Owner – Gerber Jewelers

CC: Jeff Roy  
Councilmember Dave Thune