

From: [Catherine Spaeth](mailto:ccspaeth@gmail.com)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](mailto:CouncilHearing@ci-stpaul.mn.us)
Subject: Fwd: Opposition to Variances requested for 1905-1913 Iglehart Ave
Date: Monday, January 13, 2025 1:56:41 PM

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From: Catherine Spaeth <ccspaeth@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jan 13, 2025 at 1:47 PM
Subject: Opposition to Variances requested for 1905-1913 Iglehart Ave
To: <council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>, <[Coucilhearing@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Councilhearing@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>

Dear St. Paul City Council,

I received a letter regarding the public hearing on January 13 for two variances being requested for the corner lots at Iglehart Avenue and Howell Street. I have heard rumors about plans for this lot for the past several years but this is the first official notice I've received about the number of houses intended to be squeezed onto this piece of land.

I strongly object to the variance being allowed to create 5 parcels. The City is giving exceptions to a zoning code that was enacted for many reasons--I assume safety being one of them. By allowing 3 houses to be built along the alley and two houses on Iglehart, you are creating unsafe conditions for the neighbors who regularly walk along Iglehart Avenue. Some years ago, St. Paul decided it was unsafe to allow driveways to be cut through an existing sidewalk. For good reason. If the City Council truly cares about pedestrian safety and designing neighborhoods not to be car-centric, it will not allow this driveway on Iglehart to be built. Clearly, cramming 5 houses onto this land requires a driveway on Iglehart. You are prioritizing the profits of one developer over the current zoning code and over neighbor safety. As we walk through the neighborhood--children, families, elderly, dogs--we do not need more cars coming and going from unexpected places.

While I am glad to see more single family houses being proposed, I urge the City Council to follow the laws you have yourselves voted into action. The point of having a zoning code is to follow it and for us citizens to be confident that our Council will in fact follow the law. By allowing willy-nilly exceptions, you betray the confidence we put in you to follow the laws that have been enacted. As a citizen and voter, I expect the City Council to follow its own laws, as you require us to do. Otherwise, what are they for?

Please do not grant these variances. They will cause unnecessary risk and overcrowding on lots not designed for that purpose.

I would also add that as a homeowner who has put an enormous amount of time and energy in renovating and upgrading a 125-year-old house in Merriam Park, you put the efforts of those of us who have invested in our houses, in the neighborhood and in the city at risk. You let us know that our individual sweat equity, personal funds, and careful commitment to the city is worth very little. My family made investments in our house and neighborhood believing the City stood by its zoning code. However, by granting easy variances and demolition permits to developers looking to tear down older houses and replace them with lower quality housing and apartments, you are giving a clear message that investment in St. Paul's older houses is worth less than developers whose commitment to the neighborhood ends as soon as their checks are cashed. I, for one, do not want to live in a city that doesn't value its history and culture, or its zoning laws. The St. Paul City Council is fast creating a city that values developer profits over its individual citizens' efforts to care for historical houses and invest in its neighborhoods.

Sincerely yours,

Catherine Spaeth
1879 Carroll Avenue
St. Paul