

I'm writing today in regards to the proposed "boutique hotel" at 344 Summit Ave. Please re-consider the CUP as approved, with conditions, by the Planning Commission on 9/5/14.

Rules are created for many reasons by the City and those rules, in short, should be followed if they are created in the 1<sup>st</sup> place. I understand situations come up where rules need to be amended and altered but in the case of the proposed "boutique hotel" at 344 Summit, it is pretty cut and dry what the Planning Commission approved should not have happened.

1. A hotel is a commercial entity.
2. 344 Summit Ave is zoned residential, not commercial. Commercial properties are not consistent with the Land Use Plan for Summit Ave.
3. If the CUP for 344 Summit, as it stands today with the added conditions, goes forward, it's a **very slippery slope** for any future desires by a developer to be granted on Summit Ave. because the precedent will have been set.
4. Summit Ave, the longest intact residential Victorian boulevard in the country, will lose that crowning title.
5. The neighbors directly across the street from 344 Summit (inches over the 100' required radius of John Rupp's necessary "signatures" because Summit is a very wide street) who will have to live with the City's decision around 344 Summit, need their voices heard and their concerns seriously taken into account.
6. Special rule exceptions should not be given to those more affluent than others or in "the good old boy network" if they are breaking the rules.

As a property manager myself of over 130+ rental units in Ramsey Hill and Summit Hill, I get to talk with current and prospective tenants on a day to day basis and their requests to bend our management rules and terms of their leases. As nice and heart breaking of stories I hear, if you change the rules every time you turn around, you put yourself in a very bad position as a landlord without the upper hand where the tenants know they can push you around and get what they want. In the case of the proposed CUP for 344 Summit Ave, the City of St. Paul is the landlord and needs to follow the zoning rules they put in place. A commercial property (ie. a hotel) is not allowed, due to zoning, at 344 Summit Ave, simple as that.

#### **A possible "easy" fix to this mess of neighbors and organizations in an uproar with the current CUP?**

- ❖ Require the removal of the word "hotel" and replace it with "residence" or "apartment building". At the 8/28/14 Zoning Committee meeting which I attended, John Rupp himself said to the committee to think of the project as a 10 unit apartment building. So why not re-name it to that, "boutique apartments"? It may not sound as fancy as "boutique hotel" but it may eliminate a lot of zoning hassle.
- ❖ Enforce the required off-street parking spots for the number of proposed units. Parking rules are a big deal in St. Paul. I was on the Summit Hill/Grand Ave Parking Task force in 2006 and continue to read today about parking requirements put on developers by the City...so it happens to the little guys and the big guys. Please don't underestimate the importance of necessary off-street parking.
- ❖ Require that the 8 conditions be added onto the CUP by the Zoning Committee on 8/28/14.

Overall, to have 344 Summit Ave as an occupied property is better than vacant. That said, making the wrong decisions today will have a long negative impact on the neighborhood and this wonderful avenue in St. Paul.

Thanks for your consideration.

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