

Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul)

From: Kevin Gallatin <kevingallatin00@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2019 9:40 PM
To: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul)
Cc: 'Kevin Gallatin'
Subject: Appeal of BZA decision on 1886 Ford Pkwy (file 19-079516)

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Dear Jerome,

I received a letter indicating that a neighbor is appealing the BZA decision to approve a variance of 6 parking stalls for the proposed childcare facility at 1886 Ford Pkwy. I would like to record my opinion that the appeal should be denied and the parking variance allowed to stand.

We live in an increasingly dense city and the subject property is very well served by bus, a bike lane, and a connected sidewalk grid. For a center of the size proposed 12 off-street spaces seems grossly unnecessary. My children attend (or have attended) a much larger childcare facility less than 900 feet away on Ford Pkwy and in my observation employees do not use any off-street parking. I do frequently see staff members on my bus.

I attended the Highland District Council's Community Development Committee meeting when this matter was discussed. Quite a few residents spoke both for and against the variance. Comments in favor highlighted the great need for local childcare and the wide availability of non-automobile transportation. Comments opposed to the variance centered on concerns about the operation of the current facility, with less attention paid to the actual parking variance being requested. I understand and appreciate the concerns neighbors expressed and certainly hope that the owners of Highland Village Montessori address the situation. During and after the meeting they seemed committed to doing so. However, the central issue is parking and the BZA was correct to allow a 6 stall variance. Their decision is appropriate given the site conditions and the transportation and land use goals of the city.

Thanks,
Kevin Gallatin
1822 Highland Pkwy
612-239-2320

Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul)

From: Nathaniel M Hood <nmhood@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2019 1:33 PM
To: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul); Nix, Noel (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Tolbert, Chris (CI-StPaul); McMahan, Melanie (CI-StPaul);
kathy@highlanddistrictcouncil.org; Susan Duffy; Howard Miller; #CI-StPaul_Ward3
Subject: BZA - Variance Support for 1886 Ford Pkwy Variance Request

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Dear City of St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals members -

I am contacting you in support of the parking space variance request for Highland Village Montessori located at **1886 Ford Parkway**.

There's a big need for affordable daycare and pre-school in the city. It's difficult to get spots. In fact, my wife had to extend maternity leave by 3 months, just so we could get a spot in the neighborhood – and we consider ourselves lucky. My daughter attends Highland Village Montessori, we love the school and the staff (many of which are nearby St. Kate's students and recent graduates). We plan on having another child and (fingers crossed) we hope our second kid can attend Highland Village Montessori as well. We enjoy being able to walk and bike for pick-up/drop off on nice days.

I believe the Highland District Council's Community Development Committee made the right decision in their resolution passed on July 16 to support the parking variance at 1886 Ford Parkway (note: language modifications are pending from the Committee). I think that there are mitigating options the school should be considered, including; posting signage on the rear parking spaces, encouraging parents to drop-off on-street, locking the rear alleyway door during drop-off/pick-up periods, and this message can be posted at the entry to the school and reminders sent through the school's quarterly newsletter. These should be considered as conditions on an application.

In the last three years, on our block alone, we've seen multiple young couples purchase homes (three of whom now have young children). It's great to see young families move into the neighborhood, but it's putting pressure on available child care options. We've also seen the closure of Wholechild Preschool in the last few months. When the school recently closed, it left the parents of over 50 children looking for new accommodations.

Regarding the specifics of the appeal, granting parking variances to day cares and pre-schools is not unprecedented. In reviewing similar facilities in the neighborhood, it's not uncommon for daycare and school facilities to have limited off-street parking that doesn't technically meet the City's parking code:

- **Wholechild Preschool** (recently closed) had zero off-street spaces (1901 Ford Pkwy)
- **Lubavitch Cedar Day School** has zero off-street spaces (1758 Ford Pkwy)

Additionally, my estimates based on advertised student-teacher ratios, publicly available state licensing data through DHS, and an Google Earth, many other neighborhood day care and child learning centers have also received parking exemptions, including;

- **The Little School** has five spots, but should require approximately 7 spots (1795 Ford Pkwy)
- **Mis Amigos Preschool** has 6 spots, but should require approximately 11 to 12 (1194 Randolph Ave)

- **New Horizons** has 19 spots, but code requires approximately 23 spots (note: New Horizons provides their staff zero off-street parking on-site at 1975 Ford Pkwy. According to a parent who's child attends, available parking is for drop-off only. This makes the property technically non-compliant with the current zoning code.)

While this is likely not in the wheelhouse for consideration - St. Paul parking requirements for child care facilities is higher than many other Minnesotan cities. St. Paul requires 1 spot per employee. To provide city comparisons;

- **Minneapolis** requires 1 space per 2 employees (under Minneapolis code, it's my understanding there can be a deduction if a facility is located along a high-frequency transit route, such as the A-Line) - **6 required / potentially less**
- **Mankato** requires 1 spot for 10 children - **7 required**
- **Rochester** requires 1 space per largest employee shift - **8 to 9 required**
- **Duluth** requires 1 space per 5 person care capacity - **10 required**
- **Saint Paul** requires 12 spaces (1 per employee)
- **Woodbury** would require 1 space per 200 sq ft gross (new building: 2,646 sq.ft) - **13 required**

At a city-wide level, there should be consideration to modifying parking requirements away from 'total number of employees' towards 'employees per shift' (similar to Rochester) with reductions available to geographic characteristics, such as high-frequency transit (A-Line), bike infrastructure, and availability of on-street parking - all of which are present at the Highland Village Montessori. Since not all employees work the same shifts, the current way of regulating off-street parking at day care facilities is over-prescribing the parking demand at any given time.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I encourage you to support of the parking space variance request for Highland Village Montessori located at 1886 Ford Parkway.

Sincerely,
Nathaniel (Nate) Hood
1879 Montreal Ave

CC: Ward 3 Office, Highland District Council President, Highland District Council CDC Chair

 **FILE**
19-062869

August 9, 2019

Saint Paul Board of Zoning Appeals
City of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Boulevard West, Room 330
Saint Paul, MN 55102

RE: 1886 Ford Parkway (19-062869) / August 12, 2019 Agenda

Dear Chair Saylor and Saint Paul Board of Zoning Appeals:

We are writing in support of the requested parking variance at 1886 Ford Parkway. Our children currently attend Highland Village Montessori. It has become increasingly competitive to find good, quality care and we feel very lucky to have found Highland Village Montessori. We chose Highland Village Montessori because it was well-established, locally owned, provides individualized care with a Montessori curriculum, and because their activities include experiencing the neighborhood outside of the school fence. As most parents would, we would do anything to support the school our kids attend.

We believe the proposed new school and request for fewer parking spaces than required will benefit the neighborhood by still providing an employee benefit of adjacent parking to help retain qualified teaching staff without including spaces in excess of their needs.

Please support the variance request of the school/applicant for 1886 Ford Parkway.

Sincerely,


Daley & Jen Lehmann

Cc: Chad Haller, Architect
Varuni and Shamil Ranasinghe, Property Owners

Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul)

From: Joe Kolar <josephkolar@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 8, 2019 10:55 AM
To: Benner II, Jerome (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Fwd: Comments re: 1886 Ford Pkwy Variance Request

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Dear Jerome and members of the BZA,

Please accept my comments below as public comment related to 1886 Ford Parkway. I support the applicant's request for a parking variance.

Thank you,
Joe Kolar

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Joe Kolar <josephkolar@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Aug 5, 2019 at 3:35 PM
Subject: Comments re: 1886 Ford Pkwy Variance Request
To: Kathy Carruth <kathy@highlanddistrictcouncil.org>, <ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: <Melanie.McMahon@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Dear Chair Duffy and members of the Highland District Council Community Development Committee,

Again, I want to thank you for your service to the neighborhood. As I am not able to attend the special meeting of the HDC CDC this evening, please accept this email as part of the public comments on the agenda item entitled "**1886 Ford Parkway Variance.**"

I wish to be on record as a neighbor **very much in favor** of the Community Development Committee's already-passed [resolution from July 16 to support the parking variance at 1886 Ford Parkway](#). With two children under the age of three, my wife and I know first hand the importance of accessible, affordable child care, so I was happy to see the CDC support this variance request in July. I confess to being a bit confused when I saw it reappear on the agenda for your special meeting tonight, and I hope my comments serve to reinforce your confidence in the vote you took last month to support Highland Village Montessori's variance request.

Though our children do not attend Highland Village Montessori, we recall how challenging it was to find a daycare provider that fit our family and also had space available. As you likely know, waiting lists are the norm for daycare centers like Highland Village Montessori, and families sometimes have to get their names on the list before they even announce to their friends that they are expecting. In addition to these wait lists, families must also add additional time to their commutes if there is not adequate childcare available in their neighborhood.

It may seem like six parking spaces one way or the other doesn't make a dent on a large-scale issue like affordable, accessible child care, but your support of this variance request is a positive step towards creating an increased supply of daycare "seats" that families in Highland Park can access for their children. By supporting this variance request, you are allowing the daycare to expand and serve more kids and families in our neighborhood.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Joe Kolar
1918 Saunders Ave