

- SPPS staff and administrators
- SHA board members
- City Council members
- Writing letters published in the *Villager*
- Creating a Facebook page to encourage participation via social media comments.

3.4 Alternative Solutions: sites and designs

Several alternatives have been proposed, including:

- Downsizing the Linwood expansion by not moving either Pre-K or 4th grade.
- Downsize the Linwood expansion by limiting the number of classes per grade (from 3 classes to 2) while expanding the levels of grades.
- Expand the upper school site at Monroe.
- Fixing the systemic issue at Ramsey Middle School.
- Moving kids to another underutilized site, like Galtier, a brand new multimillion dollar building, or Obama Elementary, which has a capacity of 928 students and enrollment of just 438.
- Building a new school at an existing SPPS site such as Albion Street or a new property such as 1050 Kent (an approach SPPS is using with Rivereast Academy)
- Consider alternative designs proposed by neighbors who are well-respected architects in the community.
- Purchasing neighboring properties.

3.5 Traffic and other environmental concerns: Already busy, about to get much busier

The proposed expansion would create new traffic congestion and pollution.

- The addition of approximately 120-165 new students will create new bus and car traffic, as well as additional service traffic. The anticipated impact of this additional traffic (among other issues) and the additional pollution that

will result should be studied before any action is taken on the requested variances.

- This proposal was developed without any input from neighbors, and with only minimal changes since we became aware of it.
- Though the neighbors repeatedly stated our preference for on-street staff parking to allow for a minimized parking lot and maximized playground, the plans for on-site parking have not changed. The BZA recently granted a variance to SPPS for Saint Anthony Park Elementary for off-street parking, so there is recent precedence for this.
- Though the neighbors repeatedly expressed support for a service vehicle turn-around variance to minimize the parking lot and driveway, the plans have not changed.

3.6 Site Selection: Why has SPPS chosen the Linwood site for this expansion?

Why move Pre-K and 4th grade from Monroe when Monroe is larger? It is a question that underpins the proposed addition and variances.

Linwood sits on a much smaller site than Monroe, yet SPPS proposes that Linwood be responsible for six grade levels (Pre-K, K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th) leaving the three times larger Monroe with just four grade levels (5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th).

An answer to the question surfaced in one of the Working Group meetings sponsored by SHA. During the discussion, SPPS stated the Linwood expansion will allow up to 120 more children to attend Monroe Middle School; and later several participants reported that they know parents who don't want to send their children to Ramsey Middle School because of significant problems there.

Parents, who do not live in the Summit Hill area, want this Linwood expansion so that they can send their children to Monroe Middle School in order to avoid Ramsey Middle School. In other words, a very small school on a very small site would be expanded into a large school in an oversized, tall building in order to satisfy parents, who do not want to send their children to Ramsey.

This programming decision made by SPPS is driving the expansion and causing SPPS's purported need for the variances.

4. The Proposed Variances do not Meet the City Code Requirements for Variances

The Code Requirements are shown in the box below and discussed on the following pages in regards to the proposed variances.

Code Requirements

According to the zoning code, the BZA must make the following findings before they can grant a variance:

- The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code. § 61.601(a)
- The variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan. § 61.601(b)
- The applicant has established that there are practical difficulties in complying with the provision, 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. § 61.601(c)
- The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner. § 61.601(d)
- The variance will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district where the affected land is located. § 61.601(e)
- The variance will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area. In granting a variance, the board or commission shall make written findings stating the grounds upon which the variance is justified. Inadequate access to direct sunlight for solar energy systems constitutes a practical difficulty in the third bullet point above. 61.601(f)

4.1 The Proposed Variances are Not in Harmony with the General Purposes and Intent of the Zoning Code

The proposed variances do not meet the first code requirement above because they are not in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code as specified in at least § 60.103 (a), (b), (f), (i), (l), (n), and (o).

4.1.1 The variances do not promote and protect the ... aesthetics ... and general welfare of the community according to § 60.103(a).

This is a residential neighborhood of modest bungalow and foursquare homes with apartment buildings, 4- and 8-plexes, and duplexes sprinkled throughout. The scale and size of the neighborhood is reflected by the abundance of cozy single family, 2-story homes, and not the huge mansions that can be seen on Summit Ave.

A 47 to 62 foot building is out of keeping with the neighborhood. The aesthetics, size, scale, and siting of the building will be inappropriate to the historic character of our neighborhood: the placement of the building at the edge of the western buildable line will narrow our view corridors and decrease our open space. There is also an issue of the increased shade that the addition will have on the neighboring homes, particularly in the winter when passive solar heat is welcome, and deep shade only drives up the heating bills.

4.1.2 The variances do not implement the policies of the comprehensive plan according to § 60.103(b)

This issue is discussed further below concerning the second Code Requirement.

4.1.3 The variances do not facilitate the adequate provision of recreation according to § 60.103(f).

As noted above in 4.1.1, the proposed addition to Linwood would convert a large portion of the existing playground park to a brick and mortar building addition. This park gets used daily – morning, afternoon, and most evenings - for kids and parents alike. Parents teach their kids how to ride a bike, how to throw a softball, how to use a bat, how to play soccer, how to shoot a basketball, and all manner of traditional family athletic games. Parents bring small children to play on the equipment and the bigger kids play with other kids in pick-up games of soccer, softball, hoops, etc. Kids ride their bikes and people walk their dogs. It's a family friendly place that gets lots of use during every month of the year. And, as pointed out in the introduction, aside from Linwood Community Center, which is across the very busy street of St. Clair, it is the only public playground park in all of Summit Hill District 16.

4.1.4 The variances do not encourage a compatible mix of land uses, at densities that support transit that reflect the scale, character and urban design of Saint Paul's existing traditional neighborhoods according to § 60.103(i).

The programming changes that are driving the variances will add an additional 120 to 165 students to Linwood, a density that will have a considerable impact on the transit. The proposed expansion will create an oversized institutional building not in keeping with the scale and character of the existing traditional neighborhood.

4.1.5 The variances do not conserve and improve property values according to § 60.103(l).

It is quite probable that property values for those residential homes adjacent to the proposed addition of Linwood will go down in value. The loss of open space will affect the broader neighborhood as well, as evidenced by a renting family that has announced their intentions to move if the playground area is cut in half.

Very few people would choose to look at a brick wall for the view out their front window. Add to that the permanent additional noise, bus and car fumes, and traffic, and not to mention during construction - the dust, dirt, noise, additional traffic, trucks, back-up beeping, and general chaos - none of which are desirable to a prospective buyer.

4.1.6 The variances do not prevent the overcrowding of land and undue congestion of population according to § 60.103(n).

The variances will contribute to the overcrowding of the land by adding the additional structure on an already small site of only one third of a city block.

They will also contribute to crowding and undue congestion of student population attending the school by reducing the size of the open play space by almost 40%.

The additional 2 grade levels SPPS proposes to add to the school will also create a significant increase in bus and car traffic, as most students will need transportation to and from the school. This creates congestion and traffic for the surrounding neighborhood in the morning and then again in the afternoon as all the students are dropped off at school and then picked up from school to return home.

4.1.7 The variances will not fix reasonable standards to which buildings, structures and uses shall conform according to § 60.103(o).

If the proposed addition adhered to the zoning codes for height and lot coverage, that would be reasonable. To stray outside those constraints is not reasonable for the traditional St. Paul neighborhood which the school is a part of. Notably, SPPS has not provided any precedent granting a variance like the one it seeks.

4.2 The Proposed Variances are Not Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan

In the following list, we present the various ways in which the proposed variances conflict with the Comprehensive Plan. The citations (i.e., "Land Use: 3.12") after each item points to the relevant section of the Plan.

- The proposed variances will *eliminate about 38% of* the publically accessible open space and eliminate about 40% of the green infrastructure. (Parks: 2:10 and Recreation: 5.19)
- The proposed variances will destroy an open space, a part of a natural ecosystem and a critical element in the public realm. (Land Use:3.12)
- The proposed variances do not follow city codes; they do not follow the wishes of our community-based organization's efforts; and they do not promote active personal mobility. In fact, they decrease the opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists by eliminating a critical amenity, destination, and location for these activities. (Housing 2.1)
- The proposed variances call for an approximate 40% decrease in a natural, green space such as lawn and field, and the creation of about 44% increase in impervious surfaces such as parking lots and driveways.

4.3 There is No Practical Difficulty in Complying with the Provision

- The school board has created its own inability to comply with the provisions by attempting to increase their building's program, population, and space beyond what the property will allow.
- *There is no practical difficulty in complying with the zoning codes: the students* that SPPS wishes to transfer to this site are already being served at another, less dense site (less dense both for students per site acre and students per square foot of building).

- The applicant can renovate and update the present building to better serve the educational needs of the current students without the requested variances.

4.4 The Plight of the Landowner (SPPS) is not due to Circumstances Unique to the Property but has been Created by the Landowner's Programming Decisions

- SPPS has chosen to move 2 grade levels from Monroe to Linwood, thus increasing the student population at Linwood by 120 to 165 students. This places 6 grade levels at Linwood, a 48,000 square foot building, and 4 grade levels at the much larger 148,000 square foot building at Monroe.
- The school board has created its own plight – by attempting to increase their building' population, program, and addition height and size beyond what the property will allow.
- The Linwood School Property is a typical piece of property, with no unique characteristics that make it challenging for a property owner to use.
- There is no need to enlarge this building to serve more students: they are presently served on a different campus.
- The Linwood School Campus has the SMALLEST acreage of all the elementary schools in our City.

4.5 The Proposed Variances will Alter the Essential Character of the Surrounding Area

The proposed variances will drastically alter the character of the surrounding established neighborhood, by:

- Creating a large, imposing building with a height of approximately 48-62 feet high depending on the precise location orientation, i.e., south face vs. north face.
- Significantly decreasing open space and green space.
- Increasing traffic and vehicular emissions.
- Eliminating a vital amenity and neighborhood meeting space by dramatically reducing the size of the playground park.
- The proposed addition will create shade for both the playground park and the neighbors.

- It will hurt land values and aesthetics for the homes in the immediate neighborhood on Oxford Avenue and Fairmount Avenue. What used to be a comfortable presence visually, will now be a huge expanse that will be “way too up close and personal.” No one would choose to live across the street from that, certainly none of the present home owners did. And, no one would want to pay top dollar for those homes.
- The surrounding buildings, homes and smaller apartment buildings, average about 30 feet in height. The Linwood proposal will be roughly 47 feet, plus a parapet and utility floor, for a total of about 62 feet. The proposed addition clearly is out-of-scale with surrounding buildings.

5. The Proposed Variances are Not Consistent with the Summit Hill Neighborhood Plan (2006)

For reasons already outlined above, the proposed expansion is inconsistent with the Summit Hill Neighborhood Plan, but the following references make this fact even more apparent.

5.1 The Proposed Variances are Not Consistent with the Overall Vision

Neighborhood ambience is defined and enriched by a well-maintained green urban landscape that includes lively and safe public spaces, arts and culture, pedestrian connections, healthy natural amenities and open spaces, and well-designed new and old buildings that reflect the character, mass and scale of nearby buildings.

(Overall Vision: Principles (3), pp. 4-5)

- The proposed building mass is oversized for the surrounding residential area.
- The proposed height dwarfs the heights of the surrounding residential homes
- The present open space, used as a park by many people from Summit Hill and beyond, will be significantly reduced in size. Once the open space is gone, it is gone forever.

5.2 The Proposed Variances are Not Consistent with the Vision for Housing and Residential Life

The Summit Hill neighborhood is notable for the uniquely historic character of its housing stock, defined by the assembly of compatible buildings in context with their surroundings and the rich tree-lined urban environment. The preservation of that character is of paramount importance to those who live and visit here. To continue to improve the ambience and the livability of the neighborhood, there must be better enforcement of current zoning and building guidelines, development and implementation of design and beautification guidelines, and education of residents on these issues.

(Vision, p. 7)

- The proposed expansion does not preserve our neighborhood's character.
- It takes a historic school that was reasonably scaled to the neighborhood and enlarges it into a massive, out-of-scale institution.
- The variance request indicates that the proposed height of the new addition will be 47 feet (17 feet over code). However, that claim measures the height on the south side of the building. Because the ground slopes down to the north, the height of the north face of the proposed new addition would be 49 feet 8 inches.
- To this height should be added the heights for the parapet and the mechanical penthouse, which will bring the full height of the brick wall, as viewed by a person on the sidewalk or a homeowner living across the street, up to around 61 feet 11 inches high. Significantly more, in fact nearly 15 feet more, than what the variance suggests on its face.
- It proposes to create a building with 38.5% lot coverage in an area with a 35% lot coverage limit. Though the technical amount of lot coverage that SPPS can claim is 38.5%, the actual total of lot coverage is 39.7%. SPPS is allowed to calculate lot coverage by adding 2,355 sf of the alley's square footage to the site's actual 78,933 sf. If SPPS were to divide the buildings footprint by the actual site square footage, it would be 39.7%.
- This large and out-of-scale proposed structure will destroy 40% of the green space and almost 40% of the open space on this very small elementary school

lot. Again, it should be noted that the school and playground are situated on only one third of a city block.

5.3 The Proposed Variances are Not Consistent with the Open Spaces Strategies

Advocate for retention of neighborhood green spaces, such as parks, vegetated bluff areas, and undeveloped portions of properties.

(Strategies; H6 Open Spaces, pp. 8-9)

- The proposed expansion eliminates 40% of the property's green space.
- Once this green space and playground area is gone, it is gone forever.

5.4 The Proposed Variances are Not Consistent with the Vision for Community Life, Public Spaces, and Recreation

The Summit Hill neighborhood reaches out, publicizes, and communicates to all neighbors the social and cultural events in the community. We maintain a comprehensive and active block leader program that promotes crime prevention, community functions, and recycling to all residents in the neighborhood. We build stronger community/institutional partnerships and better utilize existing public and private facilities in the district for community events and activities. We maintain and enhance use of existing public spaces and parks. We promote maintenance and beautification of our parks, public and private spaces, and the Grand Avenue shopping corridor.

(Community Life, Public Spaces, and Recreation: Vision, p. 10)

- The proposed expansion weakens the community/school partnership.
- It decreases the open space available for community activities.
- It minimizes and diminishes an existing public space.
- It decreases the beauty of a public space.

5.5 The Proposed Variances are Not Consistent with the Strategies for Using Community Assets

Identify ways that major institutional assets in the Summit Hill area could better serve the neighborhood, such as the Pleasant Avenue skating arena, the William Mitchell Law Library, as well as events (concerts, plays, or speakers) at area schools and churches.

(Community Life, Public Spaces and Recreation: Strategies; CL6 Using Community Assets, p. 11)

- The proposed expansion does not better serve the neighborhood. In fact, how it has been handled has only served to alienate the neighborhood by its factious actions.
- If the playground is cut by almost 40%, the Linwood students will have a sub-standard playground that does not meet Minnesota Department of Education guidelines for outdoor space.
- The neighborhood will have a severely diminished asset.

5.6 The Proposed Variances are Not Consistent with the Strategies for Greening the Public Realm

Beautify the public realm throughout the neighborhood to promote increased use and better stewardship.

(Community Life, Public Spaces and Recreation: Strategies; CL10 Greening the Public Realm, p. 12)

- The proposed expansion does not increase the use or improve the stewardship of the public realm.
- The proposed expansion decreases green space and open space, and decreases the beauty of the neighborhood.

6. Conclusion

Linwood is the smallest elementary school campus in SPPS. It is approximately 94 years old and sits within a historic St. Paul neighborhood, surrounded by modest 1- and 2-story homes, some duplexes, a smattering of 6-plex buildings and a few 3-story apartment buildings. It is a cozy, friendly place to go to school and to live. It is a neighborhood filled with lots of kids, parents, singles, couples and empty nesters. It is a stable neighborhood where many people know, not only who lives down the block, but also who lives in the next block, or two blocks over. This is where SPPS proposes to expand the school, beyond the capacity of the site, and in conflict with the historic nature of the neighborhood.

This proposed expansion is driven by SPPS's programming choices and is inconsistent with the applicable code, city and neighborhood plans, and educational guidelines. One of the rationales driving this expansion – perhaps the main one - is simple: Parents don't want to send their kids to Ramsey Middle School because of problems there. They want to send their kids to Linwood's upper campus, Monroe, but they can't get in because there are not enough spaces. To solve this programming issue, SPPS plans to shift 2 grades, Pre-K and 4th, over to Linwood, which will open up more spots at the upper school, Monroe. This is not a viable solution - Linwood isn't the problem. Ramsey is the problem.

The proposed Linwood expansion would result in a school building that is too big, too tall, and simply too much for this small school site located in this small residential neighborhood. SPPS fails to demonstrate how the proposed expansion meets the criteria for granting the variances. Thus, for this reason and the reasons outlined above, these variances should not be granted.

Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)

From: Lynn DiEuliis <lynzio@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2017 11:12 AM
To: Westenhofer, Sean (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Linwood Variances
Attachments: SPPS variances 2000-May 2016.pdf

To: BZA Committee and Staff

From: Lynn DiEuliis
1033 Fairmount Ave.
St. Paul, 55105

Re: 2 proposed variances for Linwood located at 1023 Osceola Ave.

I respectfully ask that you consider my thoughts as outlined below before you vote. I am hoping they will convince you to oppose the variances.

Land Use

My name is Lynn DiEuliis and I've been a neighbor of Linwood for 30 years. My husband and I live across the street from the playground on Fairmount. This variance process has been quite an education. I have to say that initially I thought this was a land use issue and that zoning criteria would be the only factors in deciding approval or rejection of the proposed variances for Linwood. This process has eroded to the extent that the neighbors are being branded as racist simply because we oppose the variances. And, there have been intimations that whatever SPPS wants, SPPS gets regardless of the zoning criteria, as specified by law.

Kids and Size

We love the kids at Linwood. Actually, I think there are a lot of parents in the neighborhood who would send their kids to Linwood if they could get in, but they can't because it's a lottery system and apparently there are preferential groups accepted, but the neighborhood isn't one of them.

No one wants to keep the kids out, as some of the Linwood parents and Vice Principle at Linwood seem to think. The kids **are already at** Linwood and Monroe. These diverse kids are **already** enrolled at both upper and lower campuses. We are not trying to keep them out. They are already here: learning, playing, being the great kids they are. And, that fact won't change. What may change is the population at each campus. And, if you look at the numbers and the size of both campuses, you will see how illogical it is for Monroe to have 4 grades while Linwood would have 6. Monroe's campus is located on 2 full city blocks; Linwood is located on less than 1/2 of a city block. Monroe's building is 3 times larger than Linwood, so why would Linwood have 6 grades and Monroe have 4? How do those numbers make sense?

Zoning Criteria

I won't go into detail here regarding all 6 of the zoning criteria needed for the BZA to approve a variance. For a good review of all the criteria from the neighborhood's point of view, please see SHA's letter opposing the variances which was submitted to the BZA September 14, 2016. But, the main points and the simple truths as I experience them are listed here:

Criteria (d)
landowner.

The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the

SPPS is bringing over 2 new grade levels to Linwood and this is driving the need for such a large addition. It bears repeating: Monroe has a campus that covers 2 full city blocks and a school that is 3 times bigger than Linwood, but would have only 4 grades compared to Linwood having 6 grades at a school that is 3 times smaller than Monroe and has ¼ the campus size as Monroe. This is a self-created problem. The SPPS has created its own problem and plight by bringing 2 additional grades to Linwood from Monroe.

Criteria (f)

The variance will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area.

The proposed addition will significantly impact homeowners in these ways: loss of sunlight; loss of privacy; increased traffic and risks for pedestrian safety as well as impact on air quality; decline in resale home value; and loss of communal playground area that is a heavily used community asset. These are all impacts that will be felt daily for the life of the homeowner living near the school.

Practically speaking, for example: Today is overcast and grey and cold, a typical Minnesota winter day. How is blocking the sunshine and the heat it brings into neighborhood homes, okay? This is not a transient condition, it is forever.

Other Issues

Other concerns looming are the \$22 million dollar build price tag that may increase, the \$20 million dollar shortfall SPPS currently is running, the declining school population that is projected, as well as the fact that this plan is only for 10 years. Those things scare me, especially when once that playground is covered up, it can never be regained.

Other SPPS Variances

Another thing I want to mention, is the number of major variances SPPS has asked for since the year 2000. Apparently, according to parents and SPPS Facilities management, the BZA has never opposed one of their variances. The attached file summarizes those we were able to find in May of last year. That option is no longer available at the website stpaulonestop.com so the list doesn't contain any variances that may have been filed or approved since then.

But, the attached list shows that of the 21 variances listed, 11 were withdrawn or deleted, 6 were for signage and 4 were for setbacks. And, it should be noted, not one of the variances was opposed, but *none of the variances were for a change as substantial to the school or the surrounding neighborhood as the 2 before you*. These 2 proposed variances are not for signage or a setback, or requested for a school with a large school campus that has blocks or acres of land to use, or a campus that is located on a busy street that is more used to heightened traffic and noise. No, these 2 proposed variances are for a small neighborhood school that sits on less than a half a city block, where the impact of the variances is a lot more pronounced than if there was a much bigger campus, like Monroe.

What are we for?

Linwood needs a lunchroom, and improvements and all the 1990 ADA changes that haven't been done. We agree to these changes and to an addition that is in scale with Linwood's existing campus and surrounding neighborhood. What we don't agree to is the height, the massing, the minimal setbacks, and the loss of so much of the existing playground that would result if the present variances are approved.

Please reject the current variances as they stand.

Thank you,

Lynn DiEuliis
1033 Fairmount Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55105

SPPS Variances

The following are variances SPPS applied for, and listed on the permitting website operated by the City of St. Paul, which lists variances and permits as far back as the year 2000. Linwood's newest variance requests are the only ones during this time span for building height and lot coverage.

SPPS Variances Requested from 2000-2016					
Purpose	School/ Address	Description	File Number	BZA Variance Type/Year	Outcome
Signage	Highland Middle School 975 Snelling	A variance of the sign code requirement in order to erect a free standing sign with digital display in a required front yard for Highland Middle School. A maximum height of 6 feet is allowed and a height of 13 feet-4 inches is proposed, for a variance of 7 feet-4 inches.	13 180572 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 5/2/2013	Withdrawn
Signage	Highwood Hills 2188 London Lane	A variance of the sign code requirement in order to erect a free standing sign with digital display in a required front yard for Highwood Hills Elementary School. A maximum height of 4 feet-8 inches is allowed and a height of 8 feet-8 inches is proposed, for a variance of 4 feet.	13 180634 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 5/2/2013	Withdrawn
Signage	LEAP High School 631 Albert Street	A variance of the sign code requirement in order to erect a free standing sign with digital display in a required front yard for Limited English Achievement Program (LEAP) High School. A maximum height of 6 feet is allowed and a height of 6 feet-8 inches is proposed, for a variance of 8 inches.	13 180551 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 5/2/2013	Withdrawn
Signage	Obama Elementary 707 Holly	A variance of the sign code requirement in order to erect a free standing sign with digital display in a required front yard for Barack and Michelle Obama Service Learning Elementary School. A maximum height of 5 feet is allowed and a height of 6 feet-8 inches is proposed, for a variance of 1 foot-8 inches.	13 180484 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 5/2/2013	Withdrawn
Signage	St. Paul Music Academy 27 Geranium Ave	A variance of the sign code requirement in order to erect a free standing sign with digital display in a required front yard for Saint Paul Music Academy. A maximum height of 4 feet-6 inches is allowed and a height of 7 feet-4 inches is proposed, for a variance of 2 feet-10 inches.	13 180535 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 5/2/2013	Withdrawn
Signage	Como Elementary 780 W. Wheelock	A variance of the sign code requirement in order to erect a free standing sign with digital display in a required front yard for Como Park Elementary School. A maximum height of 4 feet-8 inches is allowed and a height of 6 feet-8 inches is proposed, for a variance of 2 feet.	13 179658 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 4/30/2013	Withdrawn
Signage	Como Elementary 780 W Wheelock	Three variances in order to erect an electronic message board sign for Como Park Elementary School. 1) A maximum size of 30 square feet is allowed and a 36.75 foot sign is proposed, for a variance of 6.75 square feet. 2) A maximum height of 4 feet-8 inches is allowed and a height of 7 feet-7 inches is proposed, for a variance of 2 feet-11 inches. 3) The message on the sign may not scroll or change faster than every 20 minutes. The applicant is requesting to allow scrolling and a faster rate of change.	10 222572 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 4/15/2010	Expired
Signage	Frost Lake 1505 E Hoyt	Three variances in order to erect an electronic message board sign for Frost Lake Magnet School. 1) A maximum size of 30 square feet is allowed and a 36.75 square foot sign is proposed, for a variance of 6.75 square feet. 2) A maximum height of 5 feet is allowed and a height of 7 feet-7 inches is proposed, for a variance of 2 feet-7 inches. 3) The message may not scroll or change faster than once every 20 minutes. The applicant is requesting to have a faster rate of change and to allow the message to scroll.	10 222411 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 4/15/2010	Approved No appeal
Signage	Obama Elementary 707 Holly	Three variances in order to erect an electronic message board sign for Obama Service Learning Elementary School. 1) A maximum size of 30 square feet is allowed and a 36.75 foot sign is proposed, for a variance of 6.75 square feet. 2) A height of 5 feet is allowed and a height of 7 feet-7 inches is proposed, for a variance of 2 feet-7 inches. 3) The message may not scroll or change faster than once every 20 minutes. The applicant is requesting to have a faster rate of change and to allow the message to scroll.	10 222401 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 4/15/2010	Expired

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SPPS Variances Requested from 2000-2016, cont.

Signage	St. Paul Music Academy 27 Geranium Ave	Three variances in order to erect an electronic message board sign for North End Elementary School. 1) A maximum size of 30 square feet is allowed and a 36.75 foot sign is proposed, for a variance of 6.75 square feet. 2) A maximum height of 5 feet is allowed and a height of 14.5 feet is proposed, for a variance of 9.5 feet. 3) The message on the sign may not scroll or change faster than every 20 minutes. The applicant is requesting to allow scrolling and a faster rate of change.	10 222370 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 4/15/2010	Expired
Signage	Johnson High School 1349 Arcade	Several variances in order to erect an electronic message board sign. 1) A maximum size if 30 square feet is allowed and a 36.75 square foot sign is proposed, for a variance of 6.75 square feet. 2) A maximum height of 4.3 feet is allowed and a height of 14.5 feet is proposed, for a variance of 10.2 feet. 3) The school is requesting a variance of the requirement that the message may not scroll or change faster than every twenty (20) minutes to allow the use of scrolling or the fade in fade out feature of the sign.	10 221968 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 4/14/2010	Approved No appeal
Setback (19')	Adams Spanish Immersion 615 Chatsworth	A side yard setback variance in order to construct a new parking lot at Adams Spanish Immersion Elementary School. The applicant proposes to match the adjoining parking lot which has an 8 foot setback off the property line, 27 feet is required for a setback variance of 19 feet.	10 017677 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 2/3/2010	Approved No appeal
Signage	Hazel Park Middle School 1140 White Bear	A variance of the allowed signage for two new identification signs at the Hazel Park Middle School Academy. They are allowed a 30 square foot identification sign and a 30 square foot bulletin board. They currently have 80 square feet signage and they are proposing two new identification signs for an additional 57.8 square feet of signage	09 257924 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 8/20/2009	Approved No appeal
Signage	Central High School 275 Lexington	A variance in order to erect a free standing electronic pole sign. The maximum size allowed is 30 square feet and a size of 49 square feet is proposed, for a variance of 19 square feet.	08 147419 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 9/9/2008	Approved No appeal
Signage	Mississippi Creative Arts 1575 L'Orient	The applicant is requesting two variances in order to erect a free standing electronic bulletin board sign for the Mississippi Creative Arts Magnet School in a required yard. 1.) A maximum height of 4 feet plus two inches for each foot setback from the property line is allowed. With a setback of 34 feet, the maximum height allowed at this location is 9 feet-8 inches, 14 feet-10 inches is proposed for a height variance of 5 feet-2inches. 2.) A maximum size of 30 square feet is allowed and a 39 square foot sign is proposed, for a variance of 9 square feet.	07 130402 000 00 BZ	PC; Institutional; 8/10/2007	Approved <u>Recheck</u>
Signage	Farnsworth Lower 1290 Arcade	The applicant is requesting a variance of the height restrictions in order to place a freestanding sign for Farnsworth Aerospace Elementary School along Arcade Street. The R4 zoning district allows a maximum height of 4 feet-8 inches at the proposed setback. The applicant is requesting a sign height of 13 feet-2 inches for a variance of 8 feet-6 inches.	06 122597 000 00 BZ	PC; Institutional; 8/11/2006	Approved No appeal
Signage	Chelsea Heights Elementary 1557 Huron	A variance is requested in order to construct a freestanding sign for Chelsea Heights Elementary School. The maximum height for this freestanding sign is 58 inches, the proposed height is 68 inches for a variance of 10 inches.	05 177190 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 10/6/2005	Approved No appeal
Setback (3'2")	Farnsworth Lower 1290 Arcade	A front yard setback variance in order to place two portable classrooms in the front yard. A front yard setback of 25 feet is required and a setback of 21 feet 10 inches is proposed, for a variance of 3 feet 2 inches.	02 236986 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 11/4/2002	Approved No appeal
Setback (20')	Galtier Elementary 1317 Charles	A front yard setback variance in order to re-construct and expand the existing parking lot. A setback of 25 feet is required and a setback of 5 feet is proposed, for a variance of 20 feet.	01 184976 000 00 BZ	Major; Institutional; 4/3/2001	Approved No appeal
Setback	Monroe Campus 810 Palace	A side yard setback variance in order to construct an equipment building on the Fulton Street side of the school. A 24 foot setback is required and a 13 foot setback is proposed, for a variance of 11 feet.	00 134122 000 00 BZ	Major Commercial 6/30/2000	Approved

FILE
16-067184

Nancy O'Brien Wagner
1049 Linwood Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105

Board of Zoning Appeals
City of Saint Paul

February 24, 2017

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for your careful review of the Linwood School expansion plan, and special thanks to those of you who have come to visit the site. We appreciate your efforts.

I wanted to draw your attention to some new issues as well as to issues that were raised at the last hearing, but were not fully discussed.

The Summit Hill Association has recommended denying these variance requests.

- The staff report implied that SHA had not made a determination, but SHA has been actively reviewing this issue for months, and had submitted its recommendation to the City previously.

Banding kids from Pre-K to 4th grade is a choice.

- Tom Parent cites studies that show that banding kids from grades Pre-K to 3rd grade is beneficial. That may be true, but it does not justify shifting 4th grade to Linwood. This programming shift of 4th graders is truly just a desire of the SPPS' own making.
- Presently, approximately 60% of the Pre-K students at Linwood do not enroll in Kindergarten at Linwood, but shift to other schools. This strongly suggests that Pre-K program is not actually an integrated part of the Linwood Monroe School, but rather an "add on" to the school. While shifting Pre-K to the Linwood site may make some sense, it would be appropriate to size the Pre-K program spaces to what the population of *Linwood* students actually will be. Essentially, two of the three Pre-K classrooms will be serving students who will not be Linwood students when they enter Kindergarten.

Decreasing the programming/student population would certainly decrease the size of the expansion.

- Despite what Tom Parent claimed at the first hearing, decreasing the SPPS plans for student programming and population would certainly decrease the size of the building.

- Not shifting 4th grade would allow the 3rd floor of the addition to be significantly reduced by eliminating the three fourth grade classrooms as well as the special ed. pull out rooms that serve that grade. This would significantly help the affect of shading created by the high height of this wing of the building.
 - It would also likely decrease the size of the cafeteria.
 - It would decrease the number of parking spaces needed by 3.
 - It would decrease the population on the site and the traffic.
- Decreasing the number of Pre-K classes by two classrooms would allow for a shift of 2 classrooms down to the first floor (drama and science, perhaps), and allow a shifting of classrooms away from the new wing, helping to decrease the height of the addition.

SPPS mischaracterized the status of the Monroe and Linwood sites, and did not fully review other ways to accommodate their desires.

- Despite what Tom Parent said, the Monroe property is not “fully built out.” The Monroe School sits on two city blocks. One of those blocks has the school on it. The school covers much of the block, but a second floor addition on the southern section would be possible. More significantly, the second block is entirely open and available for the construction of a building.
- The Monroe building currently hosts an Automotive Center. Tom Parent lightly referred to this as a non-traditional asset for a middle school. That is misleading, as the Automotive Center has no association with the Monroe middle school at all. It is a program for 10th, 11th, and 12th graders who attend high school at other locations. SPPS could move this large and unrelated program to another, better site and use that space for Monroe programming.
- The Monroe building hosts ECFE programs, which also have no association with the Monroe middle school. SPPS could move this program to another site and use that space for Monroe programming.
- Tom Parent likes to clarify that there is a smaller campus than Linwood – but it is a high school located in downtown building. Our group is always careful to clarify that Linwood is the smallest Elementary school in SPPS.
- SPPS was offered the opportunity to purchase the property immediately east of the school on Osceola last year, and refused. That additional acreage would have eliminated the need for a lot coverage variance.

SPPS has selectively highlighted laws, guidelines, standards, regulations and best practices that promote their agenda, but not those that conflict with their agenda.

- SPPS highlights the significance of the ADA of 1990, but ignores the importance of the 1974 designation of this area as a State Historic District.
- SPPS highlights the Minnesota Department of Education Guidelines for creating adequate classroom space for these students, but ignores the guidelines of creating adequate playgrounds and exterior spaces.
- SPPS highlights the studies that promote banding kids grades Pre-K to 3rd grade, but ignores the studies that highlight the importance of outdoor play for children's mental, social, physical, and cognitive development.
- SPPS highlights the sections of the City Comprehensive Plan that promote education, but ignores the sections that encourage historic preservation, healthy communities, neighborhood character and green space.
- Bryan Bass, the Linwood Principal, stated that the "smaller campus" of Linwood "is a draw" for students, yet he denies the logical deduction that increasing students and density and decreasing the open space would become a deterrent to families.
- SPPS claims that they are seeking "high quality spaces that are inclusive for all kids," yet denies the validity of the concerns of neighborhood kids.

SPPS has characterized this as an issue of equity, yet this creates inequity.

- SPPS is taking the smallest elementary school by acreage and creating a shrunken play area that is grossly inequitable when compared to any other school. It is particularly troubling that Randolph Heights, Highland Elementary, and St. Anthony Elementary (the "whitest" elementary schools) will have enormous play spaces while this minority-majority school will not.
- The zoning codes apply to all buildings in all parts of the city equally. The racial make up of the students and neighbors should not matter. Zoning codes pre-date many other city regulations because our leaders understand that we are all affected by buildings, and that a fair playing field for property owners and neighbors ought to exist.
- SPPS staff have denigrated the neighbors as racist, elitist, and – as you witnessed – prejudiced against disabled kids. These insults all of us, and is particularly noxious to those of us who are people of color and disabled.

Green space and a well-balanced neighborhoods are not privileges, but rights that we all deserve.

- When I spoke with SPPS staff in the spring of 2016 about our neighborhood's concerns, Jackie Turner responded (I paraphrase) "If we let this neighborhood get changes, what will that signal to other neighborhoods?" Again, I believe that all neighborhoods deserve to have open green space and well-balanced neighborhoods, and encourage SPPS to approach these projects with the broadest concepts of equity and fairness for all of our city's residents.

Nancy O'Brien Wagner