



North End Neighborhood Organization (District 6)
171 Front Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55117
651-488-4485
ed@nenostpaul.org

April 21, 2021

Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission
15 West Kellogg BLVD
Saint Paul, MN 55101

RE: 444 Maryland Avenue Requested Zoning Change from a B1 to T2

We want to thank both the planner, Mr. Alfureedy and the committee for laying this over for two weeks. The organization was able to connect with neighbors regarding the rezoning of 444 Maryland. At that meeting the overwhelming consensus by neighbors was on recommending denial of the request. Jubilee Dee our Community Coordinator met with Princeton Apartments (across the street from 444 Maryland) and they too requested denial of the request. The office received an email and phone call requesting denial.

In all conversations neighbors spoke to the issues stemming from the parking lot and the sheer volume of police visits. From January 1, 2018 to March 8, 2021 there have been 1757 records generated by this business; including disturbances, fights, narcotics, weapons possession, strong-armed robbery, aggravated assaults, felony assaults, terroristic threats, Governor's Executive Order violation and theft. These included proactive police visits. Clearly the business is unable to mitigate issues stemming from the lot.

Our discussions included the fact that DSI erroneously allowed the Tobacco Shop to obtain a license by mistake. If that did not occur the neighborhood would have been allowed to have discussions regarding the parking lot, security, neighbors' concerns and license conditions. So now a business and neighbors are at cross purposes, which places us all in an uncomfortable position. The application to rezone the property from B1 to T2 has been submitted by the owner solely to allow the Tobacco Shop to continue.

Discussion at the board level included the historical use of the property has been a supermarket, B1 is a compatible and appropriate use by the city of Saint Paul's general intent regarding zoning, "the B1 local business district is intended to permit those uses as are necessary to satisfy the basic convenience shopping or service needs of persons residing in nearby residential areas" and B1 zoning fits the intent of the code by offering services to those *local* to the business.

The board also discussed license conditions and ways to mitigate the issues neighbors are experiencing. As stated the parking lot has been determined to be a main concern; cars are parking in any direction, other cars are unable to leave, entering cars drive over the boulevard, people are out of their cars interacting with others leading to a chaotic scene. We are looking forward to working with the owner regarding these issues and ask the lot be improved with designated striped spots, plantings on the boulevard, designated enter and exit signage. The owner mentioned that the door to the Tobacco Shop would be locked and a bathroom would be built ensuring complete separation. While the requests may mitigate issues, there is still work to be done.

The question is should zoning be used to mitigate issues created by a business? The North End Neighborhood Organization's Board of Directors was unable to reach consensus to make a recommendation on the requested rezoning of 444 Maryland Avenue.

As a neighborhood organization we weigh the interests of the business with neighborhood livability and take into account zoning determines the allowable uses to which land may be put. The uses to which land may be put, in turn, influence what environmental and human health impacts may result from the activities allowed to take place on the land as well as giving the community some control over its land uses, appearance, and quality of life. Still the question remains should zoning be used to mitigate livability issues of a surrounding neighborhood? We have decided to send the question to you; the Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission.

Thank-you and if you have questions please contact our office at the numbers above.

Regards:



Karin Groening
Chair

Enclosures

CC:

Ward 5 City Council Offices
Benjamin Loetscher, Attorney at Law
Mr. Ali Alfureedy

Date: 03 / 22 / 2021

Address: 461 MARY LAND AVE W

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

As a neighbor, I do not support the change in zoning at 444 Maryland Avenue from a B1 to a B3. The business has not been a good neighbor. Trash and loitering happens all the time and there are numerous police visits to the property. It would be better for the neighborhood if the property was not rezoned and the tobacco shop was not located there. The Zoning stays with the property not the business and that is also concerning.

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Thank-You:

Soe

Date: 03/22/21

Address: 461 Maryland Ave W

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

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Thank-You: *Phogy Meh*

Date: 3/22/21

Address: 455 Maryland Ave W # 355

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

As a neighbor, I do not support the change in zoning at 444 Maryland Avenue from a B1 to a B3. The business has not been a good neighbor. Trash and loitering happens all the time and there are numerous police visits to the property. It would be better for the neighborhood if the property was not rezoned and the tobacco shop was not located there. The Zoning stays with the property not the business and that is also concerning.

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Thank-You: *[Signature]*

Date: 3, 22, 21

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Thank-You: 

Date: 03/22/2021

Address: 1221 MARYLAND AVE W

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

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Thank-You: *Sax*


Date: 03/22/2021

Address: 461 MARYLAND AVE W

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

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Thank-You: 


Date: 3/22/21

Address: 467 MARYLAND AVE W

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

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Thank-You: 

Date: 03/22/2021

Address: HGT MARYLAND AVE W

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

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Thank-You: eh mao wah

Date: 22/2021

Address: 467 Maryland AVE W

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

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Thank-You: Watt

Date: 03/22/2021

Address: 467 MARYLAND AVE W

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

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Thank-You: wah


Date: 03/22/2021

Address: 455 MARYLAND AVE W

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

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To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

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ဒီပမ္းပုၤလၢနခိၣ်နပၤဒီးပုၤတၢ်ဖိတၢ်အသိးပတၢ်လိာ်ဆိၣ်ထွဲမၤစၢၤတၢ်ဆိတလဲဟီၣ်ကဝီၤ444 Maryland Avenue ဆူB1 to a B3န့ၣ်ဘၣ်.အတၢ်မၤမုၢ်ကျိၤဝဲၤကွၢ်တၢ်ဖိးတၢ်မၤန့ၣ်တကဲဘျုးစ့ၢ်ကိးလၢပုၤလၢပခိၣ်ပပၤဒီးပုၤတၢ်ဖိသ့ၣ်တဖၣ်အဂီၢ်ဘၣ်.ပုၤလဲၤထီၣ်က့ၤလီၤလဲၤဝဲၤဝဲၤဝဲၤအါဒီးတၢ်ကမ့ၢ်သ့ၣ်တဖၣ်အိၣ်အါဒီးပၤကီၢ်အတၢ်လဲၤအိၣ်သကိးတဖၣ်စ့ၢ်ကိးအါဝဲန့ၣ်လီၤ.ဟီၣ်ကဝီၤမ့ၢ်တဆိတလဲအသးဒီးtobaccoကျးမ့ၢ်တအိၣ်ဖဲန့ၣ်ဘၣ်န့ၣ်ကမ့ၢ်တၢ်ဂ့ၤတခါလၢပုၤလၢပခိၣ်ပပၤဒီးပုၤတၢ်ဖိသ့ၣ်တဖၣ်အဂီၢ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.ဟီၣ်ကဝီၤကဘၣ်အိၣ်ဖဲတၢ်သ့ၣ်ထီၣ်အလီၢ်လီၢ်သန့ၣ်က့ၤတၢ်မၤမုၢ်ကျိၤဝဲၤကွၢ်တၢ်ဖိးတၢ်မၤတကြးအိၣ်ဝဲလၢဘၣ်.တၢ်ဘျုးဒိၣ်မးန့ၣ်လီၤ.

Thank-You: wcjh

Date: 3/22/2021

Address: 455 Maryland AVE W

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

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Thank-You: SAV

Date: 03/22/2021

Address: 1221 MARYLAND

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

As a neighbor, I do not support the change in zoning at 444 Maryland Avenue from a B1 to a B3. The business has not been a good neighbor. Trash and loitering happens all the time and there are numerous police visits to the property. It would be better for the neighborhood if the property was not rezoned and the tobacco shop was not located there. The Zoning stays with the property not the business and that is also concerning.

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Thank-You: Paw

Date: 03 / 22 / 2021

Address: 455 Maryland Ave W

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

As a neighbor, I do not support the change in zoning at 444 Maryland Avenue from a B1 to a B3. The business has not been a good neighbor. Trash and loitering happens all the time and there are numerous police visits to the property. It would be better for the neighborhood if the property was not rezoned and the tobacco shop was not located there. The Zoning stays with the property not the business and that is also concerning.

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Thank-You: NAY

Date: 03/27/2021

Address: 455 MARYLAND AVE W

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

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Thank-You: [Signature]


Date: 03/22/2021

Address: 461 MARYLAND AVE W

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

As a neighbor, I do not support the change in zoning at 444 Maryland Avenue from a B1 to a B3. The business has not been a good neighbor. Trash and loitering happens all the time and there are numerous police visits to the property. It would be better for the neighborhood if the property was not rezoned and the tobacco shop was not located there. The Zoning stays with the property not the business and that is also concerning.

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Thank-You: 

Date: 3/22/2021

Address: 455 Maryland Ave W

To: The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission

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Thank-You: HTOO

Community Meeting: 444 Maryland Avenue
April 15, 2021

Present: twenty-seven participants including the owner, attorney, SPPD, board and committee members and neighbors

Talking Points from community:

- The impact the store appears to be having on the community and is the store involved in the community?
- The Dale street smoke shop reports do not look anything like the reports at 444 Maryland Avenue-clearly something else is needed at this location
- Very concerned about the parking lot-shootings and drug dealing concerned about the neighbors
- Correlation and connection-should not use zoning to decrease crime
- Shares safety concerns-do we address concerns by zoning-like to figure something out
- Violence is problematic-is the tobacco shop in the best interests of the community
- When the ban on menthol cigarettes started it opened the door for Tobacco Shops as a way to sell menthol cigarettes
- The business is also a member of the community
- It seems different at this location-more chaos
- SPPD:
 - Mandated-officers go by the location
 - Off-duty police work going on
 - Officers make frequent passes
 - An arrest was made regarding the last shooting
 - Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) CPTED) may help
 - Just having patrols is not working
 - The Ambassadors have been there but the people there need to want to be involved in something else
- Parking in the lot is problematic
- Parking by the fire hydrant and speeding down the neighborhood street are problematic

Ben Loetscher (the attorney) & Mr. Alfureedy Owner

- Because of the menthol ban the tobacco shop began, if the shop is taken away there will be significant value taken from the property
- Owner may eliminate the door between the businesses and add a bathroom
- Off duty officers are working there (when able)

What the Karen neighbors (Princeton Apartments) shared:

- ✓ Not safe for children to go outside and play
- ✓ Almost always see police waiting in the corner of the street

- ✓ Fear to go shopping at the store
- ✓ Always see people standing in the parking lot and in front of the store
- ✓ Yelling/ Arguing voices
- ✓ Shooting in front of store/ feeling unsafe
- ✓ Feeling unsafe to walk around the apartment building
- ✓ Parent not allowing children/adult kids to go or play outside
- ✓ Wants the store to close
- ✓ Don't want Tabaco shop
- ✓ Worried for elderly people
- ✓ See Bullet went through one of the resident's car
- ✓ In case of emergency supplies needs, Karen people do not shop there

Phone Call (Sia)

- Lived 23 years in the neighborhood
- Recently neighbors are moving
- 10/20: none gunshots and one through her windshield-she made a report
- People hanging around in the parking lot
- Loud music
- Public drinking
- Neighborhood smells like weed
- Owner does nothing
- It's getting worse

Email:

My family and I are opposed to the rezoning of 444 Maryland. Looking at the surroundings of the store, we think that rezoning from a B1 zone to a T2 zone to allow the business to sell tobacco is not adding any additional benefits to the residents but only to the business. Majority of the consumers who are buying the tobacco aren't from the surrounding neighborhoods. Consumers that do come to buy tobacco tend to hang around, filling the parking lot of the store and having others come park in the public spaces in front of the residents homes. Some parking in ways that hugely inconveniences the residents when they want to leave their driveway. Assuming that it has links to the selling of tobacco or consumers who hangs around after buying tobacco, there's been many shootings in the area that doesn't bring the feeling of safety to the residents. Just a last thought, the purpose from what I understand behind the rezoning is because the business was wrongly given the permit to sell tobacco in a B1 zone, I don't think trying to right that wrong by rezoning to a T2 zone to allow them to continue the selling of tobacco is right.

Thank you