

**From:** Cynthia Skally <cynskally@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 12:14 PM  
**To:** \*CI-StPaul\_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Subject:** 1493 Highland Pkwy

City Council Members:

I was born and raised in St Paul and I have been a Tax Paying Property Owner of 4 houses in the City. I bought the house where I live now in 2010 and rehabbed it from a narrow, 1910 duplex to a single family home to live my life out. The last house I lived in with my parents is on this same alley. Between my father and I we gave over 60 years of employment to the City.

Most importantly, along with over 23 neighbors on the alley we are excited for the applicant to be able to build a handicap accessible house. BZA members mentioned in the meeting intelligent architectural questions and comments. They too had concerns with the amount of hardscape and how the build fit into the other houses. I was impressed by the knowledge of the members.

This is the truth and reality of the timeline at 1493 Highland Pkwy. I first met the applicant in the fall of 2018 when he and his wife were at the house they bought scrubbing walls and cleaning (is what they told me). Then in January of 2019 he came to my door to get the variance approved. I signed it on 1/16/2019 and was glad there was going to be a remodel and an addition to attach the garage next door.

The start of the issues at this property was when Treehugger Tree Care showed up on 5/21/2020 at 9am to cut 3 trees down. One of the trees (Pine) was just inside the property at 1493, so therefore the branches went through my Arborvitaes. Being so close, the only notice was the loud noise from chain saws. I called the applicant and asked why he did not give me notice since I was effected and he told me 'I did not know when they were coming'; I looked out my front window and he was parked alongside the golf course with his wife parked behind him watching the guys work. My cat was missing for 6 hours.

The next time was 8/13/2020 at 6:45am when large truck with dumpsters attached lined up in the alley. They started the demo at 7:00 am and had both buildings demoed including the foundation and hauled away by 7:20pm. They had a demo permit for the house but not the garage at the time. The first dig started 8/24/2020 and there was maybe 3-4 feet of dirt at my Arborvitaes; they were moving fast and by 8/28/2020 there was only 1/2 foot to my Arborvitaes which are inside the property line.

From the beginning the building plans have been unreadable with tiny numbers and no consideration although I have asked the applicant to provide a readable large site plan (sometimes we like visual paper) for me to borrow for a day.

This applicant has a construction company and is a builder. I conferred with a couple building inspectors (outside St Paul). They told me that he should have been aware of the condition of the foundation when he bought the property.

The grade is what it is and again that is why my house (59') and the house that existed on the lot before he demoed it was set back so far.

An approximately 80 foot long 1 story house with a covered sidewalk along the house is not consistent with any homes on this block. This solid hardscape along the applicants east side of his property will cause drainage issues along the west side of my property.

Many errors have been used in the information the City is using. My house along with other houses are being used in Finding #6 as an attached garage when physically and according to the zoning code it is detached.

Interesting that we the neighbors learned: **\*\*\* Date: Fri, 09 Oct 2020 11:44:04 -0500 Subject: RE: City Council Public Hearing - 1493 Highland Parkway \*\*\*** [If you disagreed with any of the BZA's facts, findings, or procedures relating to either the 2019 or 2020 decisions, you could have filed an appeal. Appeals must be filed within 10-days of the BZA's decision. You did not file an appeal from either decision. The period in which to appeal either decision has passed.](#)

After the neighbors spent hours measuring and emailing and submitting this information to Zoning; nobody told them that they would have to spend money and appeal the City Staffs information regarding their properties. They thought they would just call and tell the staff. This wrong information is used to help approve the variances.

The construction has not started and I am seeing damage to my 8 Arborvitaes along the property line. The first dig he did was about 4 feet from them and I asked the applicant to please not dig too close. Then his guys came back and dug more and it is barely 1/2 foot; no wonder. I also have yellow paint on my black aluminum fence. The alley had 7-8 chunks of asphalt out and with many neighbors calling the City, PW came out and filled them but that does not correct the dips in the alley from heavy trucks sitting for hours in 90 degree humid temperatures. So who will fix the rest of the alley issues? PW again at tax payer expense?

Cynthia Skally  
1485 Highland Pkwy

I have many photos of the construction process.

