

April 23, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

On April 22, 2015 the Housing and Land Use Committee (“HLU”) of the Macalester Groveland Community Council (“MGCC”) held a public meeting, at which it considered the application for a variance, Reference No. 15-025872, concerning the property located at 2132 Grand Avenue. The applicant, Jeremy Exley, appeared to speak to the application and to answer questions.

Prior to the meeting, the HLU received comments from two neighbors in opposition to the application.

After speaking with the applicant, considering neighborhood feedback, consulting the Macalester Groveland Long Range plan, and assessing the merits of the application, the HLU passed the following resolution:

**\*\*The Housing and Land Use Committee of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council opposes the variance request, file number 15-025872 for the property at 2132 Grand Ave\*\***

Important to the HLU’s passage of said resolution, were the following considerations:

- The property is a duplex with two bedrooms in each unit and the owner can legally rent each unit to two tenants, including students. Thus, requesting to rent to more than two tenants in each unit appears to be a financially-driven request, not a request related to the property. Financial considerations alone do not warrant a variance.
- The student overlay district was created though years of study and negotiation to address very specific issues within the overlay district area. Granting variances may create a precedent that would weaken the impact of the overlay district.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Liz Boyer  
Executive Director  
Macalester-Groveland Community Council

**FILE**  
15-126187

**Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)**

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**From:** Louise <ldot.bennett@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 19, 2015 4:07 PM  
**To:** Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)  
**Cc:** Christenson Mary; Thees Dan And Kathy; Scott Tom And Janet  
**Subject:** 1916 Fairmount Ave. Variance

Hello,

My husband and I were previous owners of the above property. We lived in the home for a little over nine years and raised two children there. We hated to sell a beautiful house in a neighborhood that we dearly loved, but a job change out of state necessitated it.

We are still close friends with many if the Fairmount avenue neighbors and visit often. We stay with friends next door to 1916 whenever we return to St. Paul. I realize I have no standing regarding the variance being requested, but I believe it is detrimental to the neighborhood to squeeze a house in a small lot. It devalues the homes on either side as well as possibly the entire block and beyond.

One of the reasons we purchased 1916 Fairmount was the beautiful side yard. It was a wonderful green space with a swimming pool often enjoyed by neighbors on the block and beyond.

Please carefully consider what allowing a variance to squeeze in a house on a small lot will do to denigrate the charm and desirability of beautiful Mac. Groveland.

Regards,

Louise Bennett

22

**FILE**  
15-126189

**Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)**

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**From:** Kathy Thees <kathythees@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 21, 2015 2:04 PM  
**To:** Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** 1916 Fairmount variance

Dear Yaya,

I have lived at 1906 Fairmount for 34 years and we are the neighbors to the east of 1916. I am against the variance. Having an irregular lot line suits this family because now they are the owners of both properties. This variance if granted, will impact all future owners. Approving a variance such as this opens the door for more crazy requests in the future. You will have set a new standard. Please vote to hold the rule for straight 50 foot lot lines on our block.

When we purchased this house, I fell in love with the woodwork and the open space next door. It has been one of my simple joys to look out my window and have a feeling of openness. Plus, 1916 Fairmount is a regal edition to our block. The original owner built the house to the lot line which seems to me a way of preserving the large side yard. I believe there are families who would love to have such a big yard in this neighborhood. It is sad to see St Paul being overbuilt with huge homes on standard lots.

It is a helpless feeling when the homeowner tells you they have 3 choices:

Get the variance and build.

Rip off the sunroom if the variance is not approved and build. (What a way to ruin a beautiful, stately lot that has made our block unique for over 90 years.)

Or sell to the developers they have been in contact with. One look at the house on Howell and Lincoln and the threat is there that it can be much worse than proposed.

Please vote No to the variance.

Sincerely,  
Kathy Thees

23

**FILE**  
15-126189

**Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)**

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**From:** John Lavik <johnrlavik@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 16, 2015 8:10 PM  
**To:** Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** Public Comment File #15-126189

Regarding Property at 1916 Fairmount Avenue

I am not in favor of the city granting the lot width variance.

I feel that the character of the neighborhood is enhanced by variety. That variety includes various lot sizes, and the occasional vacant "double" lot. It seems to me that with the tendency to tear down smaller homes and build larger ones, or fill double lots with two single homes where one existed before, leads to "densification" of the neighborhood and with it, a decrease in quality.

I am opposed.

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John Lavik  
1881 Princeton Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55105

24

**Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)**

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**FILE**

15-126189

**From:** Jim Dickinson <jimdickinsonis@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 12, 2015 9:41 PM  
**To:** Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** Lot width variance for 1916 Fairmount Avenue

Hello Yaya - my name is Jim (Albert James) Dickinson and I live at 1911 Fairmount, directly across the street from 1916 Fairmount, for which the petition for variance has been filed. I cannot make it to the public hearing on June 22, but I am writing to express my opposition to the variance. We do not want to have another house built on that property as it would significantly change the look and feel of our neighborhood, and the lot width variance would be the precursor to the construction of a new home. Please record my vote as a "no" for the variance request.

Thank you!

-Jim Dickinson

25

FILE  
75-126189

**Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)**

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**From:** Nancy Dickinson <nbdickinson@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 12, 2015 9:45 PM  
**To:** Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** Lot variance for 1916 Fairmount

Hello Yaya - I am writing to submit a "no" vote for the variance request at 1916 Fairmount. Neither my husband nor I will be able to attend the meeting on June 22nd, so I wanted to reach you via email to ensure that you receive my vote in opposition to the variance request.

Thank you very much!

Sincerely,  
Nancy Dickinson  
1911 Fairmount

26



**Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)**

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**FILE**  
15-126189

**From:** Susan Bernstein <[sdbernstein@gmail.com](mailto:sdbernstein@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 12, 2015 2:00 PM  
**To:** Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** comment on File # 15-126189

Hello Yaya -

I live at 1904 Goodrich Avenue and am writing to express my opposition to granting a lot width variance in order to divide the property at 1916 Fairmount Avenue. Like everyone else, I have been dismayed at the overbuilding in our neighborhood, overbuilding that is changing not just the character of the neighborhood but the actual day-to-living experience of those next to the newly built homes. We have purchased our homes here because of the spaciousness of the streets and styles of the houses. These would directly be threatened by granting 1916 Fairmount a lot width variance that would allow a second home to be "squeezed in." I also oppose the principle that new homes can be squeezed in next to homes that have been there for years, thus negatively impacting the property values of surrounding homes.

Please let me know if there's anything else I can do so my voice is heard.

Many thanks,  
Susan Bernstein

Susan D. Bernstein  
[sdbernstein@gmail.com](mailto:sdbernstein@gmail.com)  
612 877 0562

27

**FILE**  
15-126189

**Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)**

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**From:** peggy cummings <pocummings@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 17, 2015 10:17 AM  
**To:** Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** variance at 1916 Fairmount Avenue

I am writing regarding the variance for 1916 Fairmount Avenue.  
I am opposed to the variance. I do not agree with splitting the lot and think it should stay as one large lot.  
The house and side lot is one of the most beautiful and sought after lots in the Macalester Groveland area.

Peggy Cummings

28



**FILE**  
15-126189

**Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)**

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**From:** MARY CHRISTENSON <mfchris@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 17, 2015 10:55 AM  
**To:** Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul)  
**Cc:** Boyd; MARY CHRISTENSON  
**Subject:** Variance Request 1916 Fairmount Ave

I would like to advise of our disapproval of the variance request for the lot line to be changed at 1916 Fairmount Ave in St. Paul.

The existing house at 1916 Fairmount Ave (built in 1925) was build directly next to our home at 1922 Fairmount Ave (built in 1922). We believe the existing house stretched over the second lot by design. Because the house sits on both lots we do not believe that it was ever intended to have the lots separated to accommodate a house on the second lot. Building the house close to the west side of the lot accommodated space for a large garden on the east side. It is our understanding that historically 1916 Fairmount had an award winning garden and was featured in a house and garden magazine.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mary Klein Christenson on behalf of Mary and Boyd Christenson

29