

From: Michael Sonn <sonn.michael@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 9, 2019 9:22 AM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3 <Ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward4 <Ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: McMahan, Melanie (CI-StPaul) <Melanie.McMahan@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: 2150 Grand Ave

CMs Tolbert & Jalali-Nelson,

I just wanted to quickly write a personal note of support for the 4-plex at 2150 Grand Ave. There has been a lot of neighborhood support for this project even though there are several very vocal opponents. I'm disappointed to see Earth Science Professors speaking out against urban infill projects, especially ones that are so low impact and are only adding several units.

This project should be a city-wide model of fitting several more units on our smaller residential lots. It is close to the university, many shops and businesses, and along several major transit routes. Please vote to support the variances and deny the appeal.

Thank you,
Mike Sonn
1458 Wellesley Ave, St Paul, MN 55105

From: Kathryn McGuire <m McGuire.kathy56@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 9, 2019 9:30 AM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward4 <Ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: #CI-StPaul_Ward1 <Ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward2 <Ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward3 <Ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward5 <Ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward6 <Ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Re: Deny variance requests for 2150 Grand Avenue

July 6, 2019

Members of the Saint Paul City Council,

My name is Kathryn McGuire, and I live at 2203 Fairmount Avenue. I am writing to express my opposition to the Major Variances that were approved by the Zoning Board for the proposed development at 2150 Grand Avenue. I believe the Zoning Board was in error in granting these variances because they do not meet several criteria for variances as stated in the Saint Paul Zoning Code. The neighbors who live close to this property have carefully chronicled the various reasons why these major variances do not meet the criteria of the zoning code and why they should not be granted. With the stated permission of these neighbors, I have attached their letter below, and I wish to express my complete agreement with all points of their letter.

Additionally, I wish to draw attention to the manner in which these variance requests were processed by the Department of Safety and Inspections and MCR Property Holdings. Throughout this application process, there were multiple errors, multiple changes in documentation, lack of appropriate communication to clarify the errors and changes, and a lack of transparency on the part of the developer and on the part of city staff in the Department of Safety and Inspections (See multiple variance requests attached below). The first variance request, written on April 4, 2019 was categorized incorrectly as a Minor Variance, when in fact it is a Major Variance. This error was corrected on a later document, May

14, 2019, but city staff never openly explained this error to area residents or to members of the Macalester Groveland Housing and Land Use (HLU) Committee. Furthermore, this variance request was rewritten on four different occasions, April 4, 2019, May 14, 2019, May 20, 2019, June 3, 2019, and the facts pertaining to the variance request changed with each additional rewrite. Changes included the number of bedrooms per unit (first 2 per unit, then 4 per unit), the number of required parking spaces, and the number of feet required for side and rear setbacks for parking. These errors and multiple rewrites of the variance request document resulted in confusing and misleading information to area residents and to members of the Macalester Groveland Housing and Land Use Committee.

As mentioned above, there was a lack of transparency regarding the number of bedrooms per unit for this proposal at 2150 Grand Avenue. As a member of the Macalester Groveland Housing and Land Use (HLU) Committee, I was present at the March 27, 2019 HLU meeting when Mr. Schwartzman of MCR Property Holdings first introduced his proposal for 2150 Grand Avenue. A member of the HLU Committee questioned how many people would be renting in each unit because the architectural drawings presented by Mr. Schwartzman appeared to have four bedrooms per unit. Mr. Schwartzman responded by saying that these were intended to be two-bedroom units, and he denied that the sitting rooms with closets would be used as additional bedrooms. Yet, sometime later, the BZA passed a motion stating that city staff had erred in determining the number of bedrooms per unit and that the units were, in fact, four-bedroom units. The frequently changing story and details, the lack of transparency on the part of Mr. Schwartzman and the Department of Safety and Inspections, and the “density at all cost” campaign put forth by the City is disturbing. All have battled to maximize profit margins for Mr. Schwartzman and MCR Property Holdings with no consideration to the properties of current residents and to the stated purposes of the zoning code.

I urge you to deny both variance requests for 2150 Grand Avenue for the reasons outlined in the neighborhood letter attached and due to the very flawed process as outlined by the facts and details of the variance request.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy McGuire
2203 Fairmount Avenue
Saint Paul, MN. 55105