



CITY OF SAINT PAUL  
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

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Zachary A. Volk  
Union Depot Lofts Association president  
214 4<sup>th</sup> Street East  
Suite 223  
Saint Paul, MN 55101

9/1/2011

Dear Mr. Volk

I am responding to your “*August 31, 2011 Occupant load actual use determination Union Depot Lofts association Community Room and Deck*” letter.

First off I want to thank you for the willingness of the Association to work with the City of Saint Paul for resolution of the exiting of the third floor party room. Generally speaking my reaction to your proposal is a positive one. However, some modification would be required.

I am citing the sections of the equivalency proposal that support granting the proposal for a single exit from the third floor party room and the added conditions that would be required for granting that equivalency proposal.

Section 1004.1.1 of the Minnesota Building Code does allow for the Building Official to assign an occupant load of 49 to the party room and deck. I will accept this approach with the suggested design proposals from your letter with required conditional modifications.

- The fire alarm system is required per Minnesota Building Code Section 907.2.9. A proposed smoke detection section would be required to be installed with DSI approval of the design prior to installation which would alert occupants by fire detection in the most remote areas of the building. **Additional design and approval is required.**
- Modification: The lobby doors next to the elevator need to be constructed as shown on the approved plan and need to be constructed to control the passage of smoke. **Additional design and approval is required.**

- Modification: A smoke separation needs to be provided between the exit from the third floor stair door and the community room.  
**Additional design and approval is required.**
- Modification: At the bottom of the stair there needs to be a smoke separation between the 2 story elevator in the corridor on the second floor to provide a clear path to an exit without passing by the elevator door if the elevator is involved in an incident. **Additional design and approval required.**
- The common legal documents would be modified to place deed restrictions or similar binding language limiting use of the space to 49 persons into our association contracts. We would further require this information be disclosed at point of sale of any of the residential units in our association.
- I will accept classifying the deck and community room as a B occupancy with no greater than 49 occupants. This would support the single exit concept. There should be at least 3 permanent prominently placed signs clearly indicating the combined occupancy capacity of these spaces. These signs will be provided by this Department.

The equivalency request for the 150' common path of travel can be approved due to the 2 hour separation from the use below and the proposed design modifications from the loft association as well as the conditional modifications stated above.

These spaces may not have an occupant load greater than 49 occupants without a second legal exit being constructed.

Please review this conditional equivalency approval and respond to me with your decision. You may want to reevaluate the financial impact of these safety design equivalencies. These equivalencies should have a far less financial impact for safety compliance for the occupants and the responders.

I understand that there is an active appeal in front of the City Council on this matter and that the Public Hearing was laid over for 2 months ago in order that possible solutions may be developed in the interim. Please communicate separately with Marcia Moermond on this appeal, and include me to the extent possible.

If you have questions regarding this conditional approval please contact me at 651-248-2920.

Sincerely, James T. Bloom  
City Building Official

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James T. Bloom".

Cc: Ricardo X. Cervantes, Director DSI  
Phil Owens, Assistant Fire Marshall DSI  
Steve Ubl, Trade Coordinator DSI  
Kyle Lundgren, City Attorney Saint Paul  
Dave Nelson, Building Inspector DSI  
Marsha Moermond, Legislative Hearing Officer, Saint Paul

