Patricia Lindgren - Fwd: Tuan Pham zoning variance request

From: Patricia Lindgren
Subject: Fwd: Tuan Pham zoning variance request

Dear Dave Thune and other council members:

I just learned today, Wednesday, April 6, 2011, that a neighbor whose house I walked by just this weekend, at 231 Isabel St. is requesting a variance for the statue of Jesus he has placed within 10 feet of the bluff edge. I read about the request in the Star Tribune and that he had 45 signatures in support of the statue remaining and none in opposition. Well, I can tell you that is because he didn't stop at my house. I cannot make the meeting tonite but I would like the council to consider my opposition to the variance request.

I am opposed to his statue(s)(there are many in his yard), for a number of reasons. But first, let me provide some background as I have lived on nearby Prospect Blvd for 39 years. I have seen his house change ownership a number of times in my life and let me just say I have no problem with Mr. Pham being the current owner. When he moved in, he had an open house and invited the entire neighborhood to it, myself included. He is a good neighbor and person.

However, since he moved in he has dramatically altered the property and in many ways that changed the bluff neighborhood in that corner.
First he put up a chain link fence on the front of his property which diminished the beauty of the limestone rocks and terracing he had in his front yard. Many of my neighbors negatively commented on it because it was so noticeable. He certainly can do that, however, it wasn't easy to see why since he has such a beautiful yard.

Next, he put up no trespassing signs with a rope or wire all around his property and his property apparently stretches below the bluff because that is where the signs are. I didn't even know that property extended down the bluff side until he put up the signs and as I've said, I've lived there all my life. He certainly is entitled to do that as well, however, again, it is the aesthetic quality of the bluff landscape that he, again diminished.

And lastly, he has put up numerous statues in his yard, including this Jesus statue, which are fine to an extent, but the extent he has taken it is excessive. The statues block the viewsheds from nearby parks and as I've stated, diminish the natural beauty of the bluffs that we who live there have enjoyed up until his arrival. I have neighbors who request that the city cut the trees on the bluff to preserve viewsheds.

Allowing this statue to remain not only is not in line with other city actions, but I do believe it to be a safety issue. Mr. Pham indicated that below the bluff is a "rural area". This is not rural. This is St. Paul, an urbanized area. His property abuts the Ohio Street stairs, which brings many people passing right underneath this statue and it endangers not only people but the statue itself as it is bound to fall during a storm, or with the normal erosive properties of the bluff. I can tell you that kids in the

neighborhood, like myself when I was growing up, are bound to play below this statue, in search of caves or whatnot, not to mention the cars that pass below this spot on Ohio Street. Should that statue ever topple it could very well land in the street below.

Every one has their personal tastes for gardens and yard decor. Mr. Pham is entitled to his, even though I do not enjoy it, as the city has allowed. However, by city zoning code, he is not allowed to place a statue within 40 feet of the bluff for good reason. The city should not allow the variance request Mr. Pham has made and set a dangerous precedent. We that live on the bluff have learned to respect it and I'm sure Mr. Pham will too. I appreciate you taking the time to consider my comments.

Sincerely,
Amy Garcia