

Rec'd 8/23

Dear Councilmember Stark, City Councilmembers, and St. Anthony Green Homeowners:

Tomorrow, August 24th (3:30PM), at the City Council meeting, a vote will be taken on the approval of the "combined plat for St. Anthony Townhomes to create 9 residential parcels," file #11-218-731. The controversy in this proposal is the creation of a new 9th parcel, which was not part of the original plan, permitted by the City in the 2005-2007 and previously developed and started by Wilder Foundation in the early 1980s.

The St. Anthony Community Council has taken the position that a 9th parcel should not be created. The process is that the Community Council's vote is not binding but rather a recommendation to City Council, which generally defers to the Ward's Councilmember to decide to how to support or modify or reject the proposed action. Russ Stark of our 4th Ward is our Councilmember in this matter.

I called Mr. Stark's office today. His Executive Assistant Darlene Morrow (651 266 8643) told me that Mr. Stark is out of state and will not be available to vote because he is at a family function. She did not know his position on the matter. His assistant on these matters, Samatha Henningson (651 266 8641), has also been out of the office and is unavailable. I left her a message. I also left a message at the South St. Anthony Community Center where the Community Council resides (651 649 5992). I left the message during regular business hours.

The history of this townhome development, located at the SE corner of Bradford and Long, 2322 Long Avenue, is troubled. The units were built cheaply and never sold, despite being on the market since 2007. A structure for 4 units was built and one unit was finished as a model. The other 3 units in the structure were left unfinished with studs exposed. After years of complaints for failure to shovel snow and mow lawns, the units were returned to the bank. The land and existing structure was sold for a fraction of the loan balance in 2010 to person in the window-and-siding business.

The new owner has been tearing out past defective building materials and finishing the 3 roughed-in units for sale or rental. Basically, the overall appearance and quality has changed little. The new owner applied with the City to change the development's legal structure from a condo to a townhome association. The difference is that in a condo association all land is community property. In a townhome association, homeowners have title to the land, on which their units are placed, and the surrounding land is community property, owned by the association. This change was made in order to seek a more favorable basis for securing financing for buyers.

The issue is simply: In an already crowded, unattractive, and poorly design development, the owner seeks to create a 9th parcel or lot for development, when units in the existing structure have failed to sell after nearly 5 years on the market and when the possibility of building another 4-unit building is remote for the foreseeable future. The 9th parcel is needed for open space, landscaping, and general enjoyment of future development residents. It should not be used for a structure that will add to the density and ugly appearance of the development. The development was designed for 8 units by architects in 1980 and should not be modified now by a person with no experience in townhome developments.

Councilmember Stark has the discretion to stop the creation of a 9th parcel. So does the City Council. This would be for the benefit of our community and immediate neighborhood.

Louis Furlong
651 332 4536

2339 Ellis Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55114
St. Anthony Greens Townhomes

Dear City Council members,

I was unable to attend the City Council meeting that was held on 8/17/11.

However, I did attend the St. Anthony Community council meeting in June. Based on strong neighborhood feedback, it was the recommendation of the Community Council that the 9th parcel NOT be approved.

I agree with the recommendation, and urge the City Council to NOT APPROVE the request to add the 9th parcel.

Laurie Spear
651-644-3879
2341 Ellis Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55114-1249

Councilmembers,

I have additional testimony for item #32 on tomorrow's Council agenda, "Considering the application of REM Holdings LLC for a combined plat for St. Anthony Park Townhomes to create nine residential parcels and one outlot."

Charlotte Pellett at 2295 Long Avenue attended last week's public hearing to testify on this item but I mistakenly sent her away because I misread the agenda. I spoke with her on the phone today and told her that I would pass her thoughts on to you as her testimony.

Ms. Pellett is seriously against re-platting. Nine residences, with 18+ cars is simply too much congestion for their dead-end street. The current homes are aesthetically displeasing and vacant at the current time. She is concerned about the new units being built at low quality as well, in addition to being worried about potential height and blocking her access to light.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks, be well,
Samantha

Ward 4 Legislative Aide
to Councilmember Russ Stark
Saint Paul City Council
651-266-8641

www.stpaul.gov/ward4

Email me to sign up for the monthly Ward 4 e-news

Samantha and Councilmember Stark,

In reference to Samatha's response below, we expect that Samantha will pass on our communications to Councilmember Stark. Please let us know if for some reason Mr. Stark does not receive our communications. We desired to know his position on the issue. We will distribute Mr. Stark's position and your message to the many residents of our townhome associations.

We disagree with Mr. Stark's position that "there is no basis for denying this request based on the Zoning Code." City Planner Kate Reilly, the PED staff person assigned to the case, stated clearly that City Council has the discretion to deny approval of a 9th parcel, which was originally planned to be Common Interest Community property.

The conflicting statements of Mr. Stark and the PED staff are troubling. We would assume that PED has the prevailing expertise and knowledge in this matter. City Planner Reilly stated that discretion of not approving a 9th parcel is the type of discretion that is regularly exercised in these matters.

Also, I am not complaining about the existing owner who bought the property from the bank. Our position is that the 9th parcel is simply incompatible with the development, which is already a marginally designed project in terms of the existing structures, that do not sell. City PED staff agree with us to deny the 9th parcel.

Louis Furlong
2339 Ellis Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55114
651 332 4536

----- Original Message -----

From: "Samantha Henningson" <Samantha.Henningson@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
To: "nancy massmann" <Nanmassman@aol.com>; "Darlyne Morrow" <Darlyne.Morrow@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Russ Stark" <Russ.Stark@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Samantha Henningson" <Samantha.Henningson@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Noel Diedrich" <noel.diedrich@CO.RAMSEY.MN.US>; "Barb" <bplum@comcast.net>; "Marge Virnig" <Virnigma@comcast.net>; "laurie spear" <lspear1@fairview.org>; <gregdiedrich@gmail.com>; "Tawnya Vidnovic" <tvidnovic16@hotmail.com>; "Andrew Tsai" <xaius@hotmail.com>; "Nicole Mjones" <nicolem@omega-mgt.com>; "Louis Furlong" <furlong@usfamily.net>; "bob/judy peterson" <jfpjackpot@yahoo.com>
Cc: <Ferdpeters@aol.com>; "Ann Olson" <Ann.Olson@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Barb Benson" <Barb.Benson@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Bianca Jones"

<Bianca.Jones@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Carol Novak" <Carol.Novak@ci.stpaul.mn.us>;
"Dan Bostrom" <Dan.Bostrom@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Dave Thune"
<Dave.Thune@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Dennis Rosemark"
<Dennis.Rosemark@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Donna Sanders"
<Donna.Sanders@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Ellen Biales"
<Ellen.Biales@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Erin Dady" <Erin.Dady@ci.stpaul.mn.us>;
"Jack O'Gara" <Jack.OGara@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Joan Reidell"
<Joan.Reidell@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Kate Reilly" <Kate.Reilly@ci.stpaul.mn.us>;
"Kathryn Burger" <Kathryn.Burger@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Kathy Lantry"
<Kathy.Lantry@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Lee Helgen" <Lee.Helgen@ci.stpaul.mn.us>;
"Melvin Carter" <Melvin.Carter@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Pat Harris"
<Pat.Harris@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Patricia Lindgren"
<Patricia.Lindgren@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Pattie Kelley"
<Pattie.Kelley@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Paula Uniacke"
<Paula.Uniacke@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Sara Henson"
<Sara.Henson@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; "Scott Renstrom"
<Scott.Renstrom@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; <lauren@sapcc.org>
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2011 4:14 PM
Subject: Re: Controversial development of a 9th parcel at failed St. Anthony
Townhomes, 2322 Long Aveue

Louis,

Thanks for your message. The public hearing on this item was closed at last week's City Council meeting. It was laid over one week to allow for testimony for a neighbor who arrived to testify last week but was sent away mistakenly due to a misread of the agenda.

I have spoken with Kate Reilly, the PED staff member assigned to this case, and with Councilmember Stark. Staff's recommendation for approval took into consideration District 12's opposition, yet there is no basis for denying this request based on the Zoning Code. Based on this, Councilmember Stark has asked that Council President Lantry move approval of this item at tomorrow's meeting in his absence.

I understand that this isn't what you were hoping to hear. If the site continues to have code violation issues like unmown grass and unshoveled walks, please call them in to 651-266-8989. It is our hope for the sake of the neighborhood that the new owners do a better job of meeting community expectations with their development than past owners.

Thank you,
Samantha

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to Councilmember Russ Stark
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>>> "Louis Furlong" <furlong@usfamily.net> 8/23/2011 2:15 PM >>>
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