

Dear Council Members

I am writing to urge you to support SHA's appeal to deny Cupcake's proposed 7 parking space variance. I am writing to you as a Summit Hill Resident (977 Goodrich Avenue # 4) who lives 2 blocks directly south of this location and who will be directly impacted by this council's decision. I also served on the Summit Hill Association Board from 2004 - 2007, and as president of that organization from 2006-2007. Thus I'm familiar with the parking issues on Grand Avenue as a neighbor and as someone who's been involved in earlier decisions on Grand Avenue parking issues.

I just learned of the hearing today so I apologize that I can not appear to show my support for our neighborhood tonight. Here are a few of my concerns:

1) Parking problems between Milton & Chatsworth. The city block where Cupcake proposes to locate has a high concentration of multi-family dwellings combined with commercial. One block south is Lincoln, which has parking on only one side of the street. Two blocks south is my block of Goodrich, bounded by Chatsworth and Milton, which has a very high concentration of multi-family dwellings. I would estimate 70% of the buildings on the block are apartment buildings or condos. A few are quadplexes like mine, but there are several buildings with 10 - 20 units. Most of these buildings which mostly were constructed between 1905 - 1920 do not have adequate off-street parking for their residents.

People hate to pay for parking which means they park on city streets. Adding Cupcake to our block, a business that already has a large following, will bring many more people with cars into the neighborhood. Even if Cupcake had the seven spots that would not be enough to handle the customers of their 32 seat restaurant. There will be spillover into our neighborhood causing many problems for the people who live in the neighborhood. I live on a corner and the streets on both sides are already crowded. This will make it worse.

As a woman, I find that particularly concerning. I used to live on Grand one block west of the proposed Cupcake store and did not have off-street parking. When I worked late, it could mean parking more than a block away. Walking back to my apartment was not safe. I don't want that inflicted on the women and men in apartment buildings in my neighborhood. I am fortunate enough to own a parking stall but many in my neighborhood do not have that option.

2) Traffic safety Most people who live in Summit Hill are mindful of pedestrian traffic and drive carefully. Visitors often do not. It's dangerous enough trying to cross Grand at the crosswalks. Pushing even more traffic to our side streets makes it dangerous for the many walkers, runners and bikers, particularly when that traffic is coming from an establishment that will be serving alcohol.

3) Consistency and Future Requests. In 2007, we came before the City Council on a similar issue involving a proposed Noodles Restaurant. Again, our concern was the

impact of the proposed restaurant on traffic and parking. At that time Council Member Pat Harris warned us very sternly that City must treat restaurants seeking to locate on Grand Avenue in a similar manner regardless of whether the request came from a chain or an independent business. He said that if a homegrown Minnesota owned restaurant (such as Cupcake) tried to locate on Grand, he expected that Summit Hill would object as strongly to parking variances.

The City Council faces that situation today. Cupcake may be an excellent business. Personally, I would love to see more restaurants like it located on Grand Avenue but that does not solve the parking issue. Until the City comes up with a solution for the ongoing and worsening parking problems on Grand Avenue, it can not grant this type of variance regardless of how much it might like the particular business.

4) Parking Safety is not Anti-Business

People unfamiliar with our ongoing parking struggles on Grand have attempted to paint the Summit Hill Association and its residents as anti-business. That is completely untrue. Ten years ago when I decided to buy a condominium I chose to move back to Summit Hill because I wanted a neighborhood where I could walk or bike for all of my needs - restaurants, grocery, and other shopping. Many of my neighbors chose the area for the same reason. The businesses on Grand help make the neighborhood a wonderful one to live in. But it also creates a parking problem that continues to worsen. Asking the city to avoid making the parking situation worse is not anti-business.

5)Community Communications

The miscommunication surrounding this variance should also give the city council pause. One of the reasons that many concerned neighbors could not make the city council hearing tonight is that it was widely reported in the press that Cupcake had decided not to proceed forward. These statements were made by the owner. It is very distressing that an issue which has such a direct impact on our neighborhood has been the subject of such disinformation.

In closing, I strongly urge all of you to support SHA's appeal and deny the variance. We have a significant parking and traffic problem on Grand. Let's try and solve that, not make it worse.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

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