



District 10 Como Community Council

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Patricia James, Principle Planner

Saint Paul Planning Commission

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1400 City Hall Annex

25 W. 4th Street

Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Commissioners,

I write today regarding the proposed amendments to Chapter 62, Nonconforming Lots, Uses and Structures, and Chapter 64 - Signs, of the Saint Paul Zoning Code. The Como Park Community Council (District 10) Land Use Committee met October 1, 2012, to discuss this issue. We strongly encourage you to keep the rules we currently have, which require signatures from two-thirds of the neighbors within 100 feet of the affected property.

As a rationale for reducing the required number of signatures by people who live in the area to 51%, the City states, "Many properties are owned by financial institutions in other states or countries. Language and cultural barriers also exist in some neighborhoods that make explaining the request more difficult." The fact that an owner lives in another state or country is not a good reason to make it easier for them to make lasting changes to our neighborhoods. This would have the effect of taking away local control and giving it to external financial institutions, which have no other stake than their own profit. The rationale that fewer signatures should be required, because many nearby residents do not speak English well, crosses the line into a discriminatory practice. In a land of immigrants and descendants of immigrants, we should not exclude those in our population who have only recently immigrated and who do not yet speak English well. Whether they speak English or understand American culture is not a good reason to disregard their concerns for their neighborhoods.

St. Paul has long been known as a city of neighborhoods. Actions such as this take away the right of citizens to have a say in the most local of actions: those that affect their immediate neighborhoods. This amendment is not in the best interest of the residents of Saint Paul and could have a detrimental impact on the livability of Saint Paul for many, many years.

Please contact the office at the numbers above if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Kim Moon

Land Use Chair, District 10 Como Park Community Council