

From: Schroeder, Thomas S.
Sent: Thursday, March 03, 2016 12:32 PM
To: Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul)
Cc: John Yust
Subject: Stone Saloon/Mar. 16 City Council Hearing

Hi Rebecca:

Thanks for your suggestion that I put together an email explaining why the Stone Saloon is coming before the City Council (again) on March 16th. I would be grateful if you would share this email as part of the public testimony with the rest of the Council and members of the public.

The sole issue is where to put one ADA-accessible parking space. Here's the background:

Last September, the City Council approved Resolution 15-1604, granting my application for a "historic use variance" (HUV) to allow a tap house/microbrewery with limited food service at 445 Smith Avenue, which lies within in a one-family residential district. The Council's approval followed favorable recommendations by the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC), Zoning Committee and Planning Commission.

As you know, the project involves the restoration of a 19th century German-American lager beer saloon, in a limestone building built in 1857 that the HPC recently designated as a Heritage Preservation Site. This is a small commercial building that was actually used as German lager beer saloon before and during the Civil War. (The commercial façade was later filled in, and the building was then used as a residence.) The project has widespread support from the neighborhood and area organizations, including from the West 7th Fort Road Federation/District 9 Council, Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association, West 7th Street Business Association, Historic Saint Paul, Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, Minnesota Society for Architectural Historians and others.

In fact, this project was the impetus for the adoption of the HUV ordinance last June—and was the first HUV recipient.

In the four hearings on the HUV last fall, I said repeatedly that I didn't want to create another parking lot in my neighborhood. (I live just down the alley from the Stone Saloon.) My plans placed the general parking in an existing parking lot 220 feet down the alley, and showed one placarded ADA-accessible parking space immediately in front of the Stone Saloon on Smith Avenue.

Consistent with these plans, the City Council included among its conditions to the HUV that "[t]here shall be no off-street parking provided on the subject site." I don't think there was any intent to ban ADA-accessible parking on the site; we assumed the ADA need was satisfied by the street space in front. Instead, I think the intent of the condition was to prevent a *general parking lot* on the historic site. And I still don't want that.

The glitch arose after the Council approved the HUV in September. I learned in November, when we began the plan review process, that Public Works would not allow the ADA-accessible parking space to be located on Smith Avenue, where my plans had shown it.

We then began a lengthy process of meeting with all the stakeholders to decide where to put the ADA parking. We explored five separate options with HPC, DSI, Public Works, and the Minnesota Council on Disabilities, and their input is reflected in our final proposal. At the hearing, I'm happy to take the Council through each of the five options and their pros/cons if that's helpful, but suffice it to say the stakeholders mentioned above agree that the plans attached to this application offer the best solution to the ADA parking issue.

Then City staff broke the bad news to me that the only way to allow an on-site ADA space would be essentially to re-enact the whole HUV, entirely the same but this time with a modified parking condition. In other words, we would have to go through all four hearings again, and pay the same fee again (\$750). But the good news is, the new plan is much more accessible for people with disabilities: it turns out that an ADA parking space behind the building requires only a 9 foot *interior* ramp into the building, as opposed to the 74 foot *exterior* ramp in front of the building shown in our previous plans.

So far, we've received favorable recommendations (again) from HPC, the Zoning Committee and the Planning Commission. The City Council is the final decider. While I'm sorry to have to trouble the Council a second time for the HUV, I am extremely grateful for the Council's prior vote of support, and would be grateful once again to receive approval of the modified HUV allowing one on-site ADA parking space.

I will be happy to address any questions at the hearing on March 16th.

Thanks,

Tom Schroeder
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