

# Summit Hill Association

District 16 Planning Council  
860 Saint Clair Avenue  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105  
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August 11, 2015

Zoning Committee  
Planning Commission, City of St. Paul  
St. Paul City Hall  
15 Kellogg Blvd. West, St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Zoning Committee,

**RE: 897 Goodrich Avenue**

The Summit Hill Association's Zoning and Land Use Committee met on Tuesday August 11, 2015 to discuss the application concerning the above named property. The committee had previously put out a notice within a 300ft radius of the property to solicit community input and feedback. The committee received 5 written responses on the matter— 3 in favor and 2 in opposition. The applicants attended the meeting to answer questions from the committee and those raised from the responses. There were no verbal comments from the community at the meeting.

The committee voted in favor of the application.

Sincerely,

Nelima Sitati  
Executive Director, Summit Hill Association

Gregory Cruz and Lisa McGann  
872 Goodrich Ave.  
Saint Paul, MN 55105  
651-690-2828

Date: August 10, 2015

To: City of Saint Paul Planning Commission Zoning Committee  
Attn: c/o Jamie Radel  
Re: 15-138-929 Establishment of a nonconforming use for 897 Goodrich Ave.

Dear Committee Members,

Non conforming multi-unit (legal single-family/duplex properties with owners wanting them to be apartment buildings) properties have been an issue on our block of Goodrich Ave. for the past few years. Our block of Goodrich is anchored at east and west by true multi-unit apartment buildings (buildings originally designed and built for the purpose, not illegally converted from single family/duplex structures) with another true apartment building in the middle of the block. All other properties on the block are zoned for single-family/duplex. Contrary to Joelle's Olson's reference in her application, while we do have multi-units on our block, it's fair to say that our block is predominately single-family residences plus four duplexes (911, 897, 890/892 and 887 Goodrich) and three true apartment buildings at 918, 903, and at Goodrich/Victoria.

The reason spot zoning of non-conforming multi-units have become an issue is because two properties that have sold in the last few years (890/892 and 897) have requested to establish spot non-conforming uses as multi-units (aka: apartment buildings). Both properties were originally constructed as duplexes and both properties have been historically zoned as duplexes by the City. The property zoning remained the same as prior/new owners chose to ignore their zoning and sought to establish or tried to convert their duplex properties to multi-unit apartments, something for which they were not originally designed/intended. The City zoning designations for those properties have always been available for owners and prospective owners to see.

Neighborhood planning/zoning is there to best serve the broad interests of a block and the greater neighborhood. If a nonconforming use were to be established for 897 Goodrich it clearly would be a case of spot zoning on the part of the Committee. I understand the financial reasons why Mike and Joelle want the City to grant spot zoning. What extraordinary reason would there be for the neighborhood to have the City to deviate from a zoning plan with spot zoning? It's important to remember that regardless of how nice and/or earnest property owners are today, property zoning is there for a reason. Zoning follows the property, not the owners and a spot nonconforming use is permanent once established by the City.

Our neighbors on our block of Goodrich defrayed two developer's efforts to turn a duplex at 890/892 Goodrich directly across the street from 897 into a 5+ unit apartment building a couple of years ago. One of the signers of the Olson's petition, Krista Wolter, is the current owner/developer of that property and still has not finished outstanding work necessary for occupancy of that property. I believe that some of the neighbors who signed the Olson's petition for 897 were against the establishment of a spot NC use for 890/892 Goodrich. I suspect they still are. Most people when faced directly by a motivated neighbor feel compelled to help by signing a petition. Folks may feel obligated to help. It's likely that

they simply wanted to “go along to get along” with their nearby neighbor, the Olsons, and may not have fully considered the implications of what a spot zoning could mean for the block/neighborhood both short and long-term. That's one thing I love about our neighborhood – most of our neighbors want to help each other out when we can. I want to do the same – that's why I am outlining my specific concerns over establishing a spot non-conforming use for our block.

A chief concern of many neighbors not included in the Olsons' 100 ft. radius is that allowing a spot nonconforming use for 897 Goodrich will set a bad precedent and may embolden Krista Wolter to re-attempt to establish 890/892 as a multi-unit apartment building instead of it's duplex zoning. The bottom line is that everyone has a right to expect consistent, standardized zoning for their block/neighborhood. Not everyone has an expectation to fundamentally change the zoning of their property unless there is an extraordinary reason for the City on behalf of the neighborhood to do so. Other than a personal financial incentive for the Olsons (which was determined to not be a hardship by City staff) I don't see that establishing a spot non-conforming use zoning designation will accomplish anything positive for the neighborhood.

Rather, a spot non-conforming use will set a precedent to allow/encourage the conversion of single-family/duplex properties to apartment buildings. You only need to look to the current application by the Olson's and and the two attempts to do the same at 890/892 Goodrich as proof. I can see why the owners of the properties want to go multi-unit – It's a hot rental market right now. It can be profitable to be a landlord. The only thing is that we, and I suspect many other property owners on the block, did not choose to purchase our homes to make money off of them. Other neighbors have detailed their concerns over increased density on the block (parking, noise, etc.). This is where we live and proper zoning helps keep a balance between rentals for business/income and keeping our block/neighborhood livable. I don't think we need to go back to a time when opportunistic people split up single-family homes and ruined the nature of a neighborhood in order to make a buck. I applaud the City's efforts to increase safety for tenants by increasing regulation enforcement and regular inspections. Part of that enforcement includes following zoning regulations that have been long-established.

I hate to lump what might otherwise appear to be a minor zoning issue for the Olsons along with the greater issue of spot non-conforming use but it has important implications for our block. The zoning issues are inter-connected and are legacy issues related to circumventing appropriate zoning in the first place.

People are the main thing that makes our neighborhood and we love our neighbors. We hope the Olsons understand that our opposition to their application is in no way personal and we truly welcome them to the neighborhood. We are simply stating our opposition regarding establishment of a spot non-conforming use.

Sincerely,

Greg Cruz and Lisa McGann

[gregcruz@msn.com](mailto:gregcruz@msn.com)  
[lem1794@hotmail.com](mailto:lem1794@hotmail.com)

**McCarthy, Nicole (CI-StPaul)**

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**Subject:** FW: 897 Goodrich

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**From:** [conniemiles@comcast.net](mailto:conniemiles@comcast.net) [mailto:[conniemiles@comcast.net](mailto:conniemiles@comcast.net)]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 10, 2015 4:46 PM  
**To:** Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** 897 Goodrich

Dear Jamie,

I have lived at 911 Goodrich since 1967. Over those years I have experienced great changes to this block. With the mix of duplexes, apartments, and the group home next door to me the block has become less residential. I do not want to see more nonblock residents being allowed to increase the noise, traffic, parking etc. Please consider those of us who actually live here have some say in what happens by not granting this non-conforming uses.

Connie Miles  
911 Goodrich Avenue

**McCarthy, Nicole (CI-StPaul)**

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**To:** nico  
**Subject:** FW: 897 Goodrich Avenue  
**Attachments:** scan.pdf

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**From:** Jane Lynch [<mailto:janelynch@comcast.net>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 11, 2015 10:54 AM  
**To:** Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul); [summithill@visi.com](mailto:summithill@visi.com)  
**Subject:** 897 Goodrich Avenue

To whom this may concern,

I am writing this letter in support of the Olsens, the current owners of 897 Goodrich Avenue.

I am the former owner of this property.

I understand they have a meeting Thursday regarding the property converting to a triplex. I would like to voice my support as I understand this is a daunting process. As you will see in my attached letter the conversion would no way have a negative impact on the neighborhood as the number of occupants would not change. The city would benefit from a tax standpoint. The property is structured in such a way that it accommodates the same amount of people weather it is a triplex or duplex. It appears to me to be beneficial to have this property zoned as a triplex as it does have three legal units. It would make sense to zone it this way so the city can have the proper codes in place, tax base, inspections etc.

It would be my hope the city sees this as a benefit to everyone involved.

Jane Lynch

**Re/Max Results**

651-387-9405

[JaneLynch@comcast.net](mailto:JaneLynch@comcast.net)

897 Goodrich Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105


To whom it may concern –

897 Goodrich Avenue has been in my family for the time period spanning from prior to 1975 – 2014. I purchased the building in 2005 from my family and owned it up until the sale in 2014 to the Olsons. At the time of our purchase from my in-laws, the home was occupied with 2 in the lower level, 1 on the main and 3 on the second floor. At the time of sale to the Olsons, they inherited the existing leases – which included 1 tenant on the second floor and 2 tenants in the basement.

The basement unit, main floor unit and second floor unit have been continuously rented as separate units to non-related tenants during my years of ownership. For the entire duration of ownership in my family, the property has never had any complaints regarding traffic, noise, parking, etc. In February 2012, a certificate of occupancy was issued for the property as duplex status. This was only temporary as we continued to use the units separately and weigh options for use of the property in the future. We ultimately decided to sell the property and listed it for sale in 2013/2014. We sold the property to the Olson family in the summer of 2014.

The basement unit contains two bedrooms with legal egress windows, a kitchen with gas stove, refrigerator, sink, cabinets, and a bathroom with sink, toilet, and shower as well as separately controlled radiators. The basement unit is separated from the first unit by a community stairwell with 3 doors of separation, community laundry space, separate radiators, and a separately used back entry to the backyard. Therefore, it is not practical for this layout to accommodate shared living between the 1<sup>st</sup> floor unit and the basement's best use is as a standalone unit and would be a significant hardship to convert the unit to use it otherwise.

I strongly support the Olson's request for this permit. Their request is the best use for this building and is as it has been used over the last several decades with no complaints or disruptions to the neighborhood.

  
Jane Lynch  
8.4.2015

August  
2015

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing in support of the new owners (Joelle and Mike Olson) to continue to use their new home as a triplex.

I'm the direct neighbor to the west of 897 Goodrich Avenue and I am writing to inform you that I knew the prior owners (the Lynch family, including Jane and Marty Lynch) during their ownership of 897 Goodrich Avenue.

The neighboring building at 897 Avenue has been in continuous use as a triplex for as long as my family (my parents, brother, and myself) have owned 903 Goodrich Avenue (1992 – present).

The previous owners have rented out the basement, main unit, and second unit as separate units to non-related tenants since I've been a part of this neighborhood.

I've known Mike and Joelle for the duration of their ownership and have gotten to know them very well. They are extremely hard working individuals who, outside of working full time jobs, invest their free time and energy into improving their home.

Since the Olson's took ownership of 897 Goodrich, the home has seen many aesthetic improvements from lawncare, to refreshing the paint on the front porch, to scraping and painting the trim, painting their alley entrance, hedge trimming, and many other tasks that come with homeownership. The Olson's are a young couple who work very hard to maintain the historical integrity of their home.

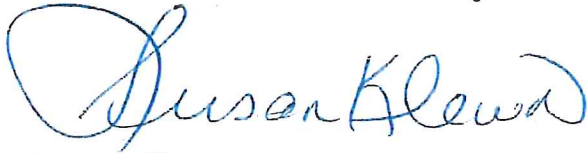
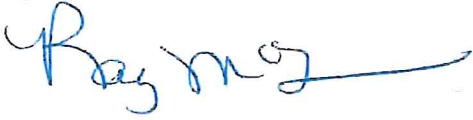
I'm concerned that if they are not allowed to continue to use the home as a triplex, the home could fall into the hands of someone who doesn't have their passion and drive to improve our block.

Please do not displace my kind, hardworking neighbors.

As a long standing member of the Summit Hill community, I ask that you recognize their plight and consider approving their

request for a non-conforming triplex.

Sincerely,  
Susan Kleven and family



**McCarthy, Nicole (CI-StPaul)**

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**Subject:** FW: Support for application by Joelle and Mike Olson for a 'non-conforming use permit' for 897 Goodrich Ave

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**From:** Richard Huhn [<mailto:huhn@att.net>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 11, 2015 10:18 AM  
**To:** Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** Support for application by Joelle and Mike Olson for a 'non-conforming use permit' for 897 Goodrich Ave

To whom it may concern at the St. Paul Planning Commission --

I am writing in support of the application by Joelle and Mike Olson for a 'non-conforming use permit for a structure that's been in existence for 10+ years' at 897 Goodrich Ave in St. Paul. I have been a tenant on the second floor of that building for 2+ years, dating back to the previous owners of the property. Before my arrival, and until April 2015, the basement floor apartment was occupied by two young employed women who were very quiet, friendly and sociable. Prior to Joelle and Mike, the first floor was occupied by a young family who moved out in the Winter of 2014. The Olsons painstakingly refinished the first floor dwelling in 2014 to serve as their home when they purchased the property.

The Olsons have always treated me well, with great concern for my comfort on the second floor. They show great respect for the historic character of the house and keep it well maintained. In addition, they show a real interest in neighbor relationships.

I hope the St. Paul Planning Commission will view the Olson's plans to restore tenants to the basement apartment positively, as I think this would be a valuable asset to the neighborhood.

Best regards,

Richard D. Huhn  
[huhn@att.net](mailto:huhn@att.net)  
609-519-4698

**Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul)**

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**From:** hep <rpmairs@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 27, 2015 8:15 PM  
**To:** Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul)  
**Cc:** Lindgren, Patricia (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** Rezoning request 893 Goodrich Ave

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

*We understand that a request for rezoning to allow a third rental unit at 893 Goodrich will come up for hearing July 30. WE live at 880 Goodrich and strongly oppose rezoning to allow for a third unit. We see no reason why the present R-2 zoning requirements should be changed.*

*Several years ago owners of 890-892 Goodrich requested a similar variance, strongly opposed by neighbors and finally remodeled the building for a two family residence. Allowing a variance at 893 might encourage a similar effort now or in the future at this building.*

**OUR BLOCK OF GOODRICH AVENUE BETWEEN VICTORIA AND MILTON IS SORT OF A TRANSITION ZONE BETWEEN PREDOMINANTLY SINGLE FAMILY HOMES EAST OF VICTORIA AND PREDOMINATELY MULTIPLE-FAMILY HOMES IN THE BLOCK WEST OF MILTON. WE HAVE AN ACCEPTABLE MIX OF ALLOWED MULTI-FAMILY AND SINGLE FAMILY HOMES NOW BUT DO NOT WANT TO FURTHER TILT TO MULTIFAMILY WITH ITS COMPLICATIONS IN NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR RELATIONS AS WELL AS PARKING CONGESTION.**

**PLEASE INCLUDE THIS EMAIL IN THE PACKET YOU ARE PREPARING FOR THE HEARING.**

**THANK YOU,**

**HELEN AND BOB MAIRS  
880 GOODRICH**

July 27, 2015

To: Jamie Radel

Regarding: 897 Goodrich Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105

Dear Jamie,

I'm writing regarding the current rezoning request at 897 Goodrich, where the owners are requesting to convert the property from an R2/Single Family dwelling to a conforming R3 multi-family property. I'd like to request that their request be denied for the following reasons:

1. First and foremost, I believe that single family homes help preserve the historic value and charm of the neighborhood while converted multi-unit properties detract from it
2. As a property owner on the block (909 Goodrich), I have a vested interest in preserving my own property value. Again, I feel that single family homes contribute to this, while converted multi-unit properties detract from it. The truth is a rental is rarely cared for the same way as a primary residence is
3. Parking is limited in the neighborhood so any additional units would likely result in additional parking constraints on the block by both the tenant and visitors
4. An additional unit would likely result in additional noise and traffic
5. Finally, the area has a sufficient stock of rental units, so there isn't a need to add additional units from a zoning perspective

Thank you for taking the time to read our letter.

Regards,

JD & Sarah Mogol

909 Goodrich Ave

St. Paul, MN 55105

612-618-2104

[Mogol005@gmail.com](mailto:Mogol005@gmail.com) & [sarah.w.mogol@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.w.mogol@gmail.com)

## Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul)

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**From:** Clyde Jan Doepner <clydejandoepner@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 27, 2015 8:37 PM  
**To:** Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul)  
**Cc:** Lindgren, Patricia (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** File #15-138-929

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

TO: Jamie Radel, St. Paul Planning Commission

RE: File #15-138-929

PURPOSE: Establishment of NON-Conforming Use of a TRIPLEX PROPERTY ADDRESS: 897 Goodrich Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota  
FILE NAME: Mike and Joelle Olson HEARING DATE: Thursday, August 13, 2015  
REQUEST: Please make this e-mail part of the packet that the committee will receive  
FROM: Clyde and Jan Doepner, 866 Goodrich Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota  
OUR POSITION: We are strongly against allowing the requested change.

We recently received a card indicating that the owners of 897 Goodrich, a home in our immediate neighborhood, have requested the establishment of a non-conforming use as a triplex for their property. We strongly disagree with this request! Let us explain why.

Most of the homes in our neighborhood are zoned R2, which means they are to be occupied as a single family dwelling or as a two-unit duplex. According to the city's property permit website, in 2012 the property was cited by the city inspector for being an "illegal multiunit being used as a triplex, ignoring the R2 zoning.

Now the current owners, Mike and Joelle Olson are attempting to turn it into a triplex changing it from the R2 designation that they purchased. This change would follow the property and establish a precedent that other owners might want to follow, that would change the character of our neighborhood forever. Comment: We fought this issue a few years ago re: Millie Stones' property at 890-92 Goodrich Avenue and the neighbors clearly stated at a hearing that all properties zoned R2 should remain R2 which was the result of the hearing.

We have lived in our home, in this wonderful neighborhood for over 38 years. There would be no benefit to this requested change, in fact it would have a negative impact to what we have. We have gone to permit parking as parking has always been a problem. Other issues would be additional traffic and potential noise. But the real issue, previously mentioned, is the precedent that it would establish, that might encourage others to follow. Thank you for listening to our strong feelings.

Clyde and Jan Doepner

Sent from my iPad