

From: Drew Skwiers-Koballa
Sent: Tuesday, June 14, 2016 12:08 PM
To: McMonigal-St Dennis, Barb (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Hmong Freedom Celebration

Barb,

Thank you for hearing citizen's comments regarding the celebration's request for a noise variance. I reside at 10xx Oxford St N, right up against the train tracks adjacent to the McMurray Field Area. Each year, the Hmong celebration is poorly regulated and St.Paul's control over the festival is noticably absent. I understand that on a holiday weekend, putting extra police officers on shift would be very costly - but incidents over the past 4 years have made the necessity a reality for the community of Como.

First off, McMurray Field Area was not designed to be a high traffic area. The majority of the streets are single lane each way and there is very little parking. The only officers I have seen working this event have been attempting, in vain, to keep traffic flowing. The frequent gridlock is a safety concern for both the residents and the festival attendees.

Secondly, because of the lack of parking for the festival, the residential streets become completely parked up by festival attendees. These are not suburban double-wide streets - this is a city area with narrow streets where most residents must park as well. The lack of parking regulation for the festival means that residents of the area cannot leave their homes and expect to be able to park within blocks of their house when they return.

Third, the use of residential yards for profit by charging festival goers to park on grassy areas increases the traffic on streets and causes abnormal levels of traffic down unimproved alleys. While city ordinances prohibit this type of behavior, no fines or preventative behavior is taken. Tensions rise high between neighbors with differing values and these differences last throughout the year.

With these 3 issues, you can imagine my shock when receiving a letter that the festival is requesting a noise level variance. I reccomend that not only the applicant provide personnel for coducting sound level monitoring, but that the applicant provide funds to properly staff the St.Paul police department during the festival and establish a parking permit system for residents.

While I want to encourage people to utilize and enjoy our wonderful Saint Paul parks, the overuse of McMurray Fields during the 4th of July holiday weekend is a tremendous stress to my family and many other residents in the area. I would be interested to hear about the benefits that the city receives from this festival.

thank you,

Drew Skwiers-Koballa