

From: Mike and Benita [<mailto:warns@pmlink.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 9:28 PM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward2
Subject: 17 Jan 18 City Council Agenda Item 22, ORD 17-64

Please enter this email message into the official record for the January 17, 2018 St. Paul City Council Public Hearing for Item 22, ORD 17-64. This is to exempt the Allianz Field soccer stadium from the requirement to obtain noise variances for matches.

I wish to go on record opposing this change to city code that will primarily benefit a private developer to the detriment of the citizens of St. Paul. At every public meeting to discuss construction of this stadium, citizens expressed serious concerns about excessive noise levels coming from the stadium during soccer matches. At this late date, with construction well underway, the City is going to actually change city code to allow the privately owned team to exempt them from all noise rules. This is the only opportunity for official public input into this ordinance. Something of this magnitude, and given the high level of citizen concern over excessive noise levels from this facility, should be given a far more widespread public vetting than this one public hearing. This comes across as a cozy relationship between the City and the owners of the soccer team to push this through quickly and give them special privileges not available to other individuals or businesses. This ordinance should have been brought out to the neighborhoods for thorough debate and input prior to this public hearing.

The owners group told citizens that the design of the stadium would keep most of the noise contained within the facility. If that is true, then why do they need a noise level exemption? The team owners will never have to pay any property taxes for using the land. They were exempted from state and local sales taxes for all the materials used to build the facility. These owners have already received enough financial breaks from us taxpayers. They should be required to obtain noise variances like everyone else, and to pay all appropriate fees. Why should we give these people any more?

The team's schedule calls for 20 matches per year, on Saturday nights, and concentrated in the warmer weather months. This means that area residents who do not enjoy soccer will be subjected to this noise pollution on the majority of Saturday evenings in our all-too-short summer, which can prevent enjoyable use of our own back yards. There is a reason that entities that exceed accepted noise levels must apply for and pay for variances. About the only concession in this matter that should be made is to allow the team to fill out one application annually that will cover all 20 matches, but still pay the fee for 20 nights of noise pollution.

This team has a track record of disregarding the rules. They put up temporary signs all around the construction site that far exceed the legally allowed square footage for such signs. They will be coming before you in a couple of weeks to ask for an after-the-fact variance so they can keep their temporary signs. They are also asking for 10 times the allowable amount of permanent signage for the site. This shows the team's total disregard for the community where they will make their fortune, at our expense. How much more do we have to give these people? So far they have only given us closed roads, construction noise, and excessive signage, with the promise of more traffic and noise, which has degraded our quality of life.

Just because the City owns the facility doesn't mean that the City should change our laws to accommodate the private owners of this sports team. This team should be required to pay for the noise pollution that they will inflict on us. Do not change the law for their benefit.

Benita Warns
1440 Lafond Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-641-1037
warns@pmlink.com