

From: [Sonja Mason](#)
To: [Maki, Taina \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Cc: [*CI-StPaul Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Opposition to Rezoning 695 Grand [resent email]
Date: Wednesday, August 4, 2021 6:09:07 PM

Dear Councilmember Noecker:

We are resending this email that contains the March 8, 2021 resolution passed by our board of directors in opposition to the rezoning, variances and CUP for the 695 Grand/Dixies. It is included below.

While this email was originally intended to convey that opposition as public comment, it has become necessary to add commentary on the process itself, which seems designed to inhibit rather than encourage meaningful participation by the electorate. This email is directed to your assistant, after receiving a notice that you are out of town. There was also a small orthographical mistake in the copied email — contact-council@ci.stpaul.mn.us instead of contact.council@ci.stpaul.mn.us—which further illustrates the problem with public comment when there is no public hearing allowed. It is far too easy to have emails ignored, bounced back, or otherwise not read.

Your office informed several neighbors who wrote in to you via email that they should direct their public comment to Ms. Butler, at the email address in the forwarded email below. As you can read below, she informed us that she was not the correct person to receive public comment for the planning commission. Several other neighbors received similar replies that Ms. Butler does not handle public comment. We are extremely concerned that this led to public comment not making it to the public comment folder. Further, the Planning Commission website does not include a record of the public comment received. Please advise.

In general, the division of this project into separate applications and the ever shifting list of addresses to whom to send comments (or not to send comments) has created excessive barriers to public participation. Digital participation via MS Teams is technologically difficult and the 2 minute time limits make it impossible to delve into the complex details of this application. Now, the City council meeting will not even offer that — there will be no live public comment offered for the city council hearing on the rezoning of 695 Grand/Dixies.

Ms. Noecker, we implore you as our elected representative to vote against the rezoning and put a stop to this damaging project and its incredibly flawed process.

SAINT ALBANS ROW CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul)** <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Date: Mon, Jul 12, 2021 at 9:38 AM
Subject: RE: OPPOSITION TO 695 GRAND / DIXIES CUP REZONING AND VARIANCES
To: St Albans Row Condo Association <sarca55105@gmail.com>

Please do not send written comments/testimony regarding the Zoning Committee public hearing on July 15th I only handle Planning Commission meetings I am the Planning Commission secretary. These emails should be sent to PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary@ci.stpaul.mn.us I have forwarded this email to that address. Thank you.

From: St Albans Row Condo Association <sarca55105@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 10, 2021 5:00 PM
To: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: OPPOSITION TO 695 GRAND / DIXIES CUP REZONING AND VARIANCES

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Members of the Planning Commission and City Council:

Members of our Association participated in early "community outreach" activities with this developer for 695 Grand/Dixies via Zoom. Overwhelmingly, the concerns expressed by the community centered on the out of scale, overly large size, height, and bulk of the proposal, and the resultant negative effects caused by the size and intensity on the historic character, traffic and parking, sunlight, pedestrian safety, and quality of life. Not one of our main concerns was addressed in a meaningful manner. In fact, on June 3rd, 2021 the developer submitted a revised proposal **that was even taller than the original**. What is the a plight of landowner that requires 9, 10 and 15 foot ceilings?

Below is the text of the letter sent March 8, 2021 that was passed by unanimous consent of all owners. The concerns expressed in March are only greater now.

We are the owners of the seven condominium units that make up the St. Albans Row Condominium Association. These condos are located at 21-27 St. Albans Street South. They are on the west side of St. Albans directly north of the narrow alley that separates them from the parking lot at 695 Grand Avenue. This historic building was built in 1892. It was designed by famed architect Clarence Johnston and has been featured in many publications and a PBS special on Johnston because of its beautiful and unique features. We have worked hard over the years at significant cost to preserve and maintain this building not only for our use but also for the next generation.

We write because we are concerned that the proposed development plans for the

“Dixie’s” site will damage the look and feel of our beautiful neighborhood. We recognize that 695 Grand has favorable potential for development and we do not want to stand in the way of projects that may benefit our neighborhood. Our concerns center on three main issues: height and massing, proximity to the alley, and parking/traffic flow.

The present proposal is for a five story building that would come within 8 feet of the alley and would completely fill the lot except for a patio on Grand. As proposed, this structure would be significantly higher and larger than anything else in the neighborhood, block sunlight, reduce our property values, and create unsolvable traffic and parking problems. It would also violate existing zoning requirements that limit height to three stories and require distance between the back of a building and the alley. The proposed structure is too high and the footprint is too large. The St. Albans block between Summit and Grand already has one of the highest densities in the city.

The scale of the proposed project would destroy much of the beauty and charm of this street that so many people enjoy. We urge all who will have a role in making decisions regarding this project to not allow the present push for development to destroy the efforts of all of those before us to preserve this unique and beautiful neighborhood. Thoughtful and careful development that respects the present character of the neighborhood is welcome. We firmly request that a revised design proposal be developed that would conform with existing zoning code requirements.

Board of Directors

SAINT ALBANS ROW CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION
21-27 SAINT ALBANS STREET SOUTH | SAINT PAUL MINNESOTA 55105