

From: [SAGGS Block Club](#)
To: letters@myvillager.com; dmischke@myvillager.com; letters@pioneerpress.com; [Frederick Melo](#)
Cc: [GRT](#); [Susan St. John](#); [Noecker, Rebecca \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [Elysia Gallo](#)
Subject: PRESS RELEASE: PETITION IN OPPOSITION TO DIXIES PROPOSAL HAS 465 SIGNATURES
Date: Wednesday, July 14, 2021 6:55:20 AM
Attachments: [PETITION A better way petition with updated numbers Opposition to ZF21269061695 Grand Cup and Variances.pdf](#)
[Petition Group 2 Scanned 7-11-21 - Jul 11 2021 - 10-16 PM.pdf](#)
[Petitions Scanned 7-12-21 - Jul 12 2021 - 4-21 PM.pdf](#)
[Dixie's Petitions 6-24-21 sorted copy.pdf](#)

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Susan St John, a neighbor on St Albans St South, just submitted to public comment 465 signatures against the Dixies Proposal. The neighborhood block club has formed a group called A Better Way St Paul, that wants a different model for adding housing to their neighborhood.

“We have excellent examples of multifamily housing right here in Summit Hill. It's middle housing. It's the scale of housing that Jane Jacobs wrote about all those years ago. Three story apartment-style flats, rowhouses, and our unique converted mansions that provide multifamily housing. We want more housing at a compatible scale. We just want the developer to follow the rules,” says St John.

Fellow neighbor Gary Todd is frustrated with the city. "The City PED-Zoning Committee voted on Thursday, July 1st to approve a request to change the zoning of one lot at 695 Grand Avenue to allow a developer to build a 5-story building. Compared to current, existing zoning code ordinances, the proposed structure will be 67% taller, have a 22% larger footprint and fail to transition, as required, to the lower density adjacent residential districts. Concerns for negative impacts to the neighborhood are being overrun by the drive to expand financial gains. Public comment for this proposal was against by an enormous margin of 10 to 1 (480 against – 42 for), yet to no avail. The zoning code is supposed to protect our neighborhoods from efforts by greedy developers who take value from the surrounding community to maximize their profits. What is our recourse when neighborhood councils and public officials fail to represent the interests of the area?"

St John continues, "At the July 1st, 2021 hearing on the rezoning, we were told that the rezoning was separate from our objection to the building. We object to the size (height, lot coverage, bulk) and the site planning (placement on the lot) of the proposed building. Just today, the staff report was issued that cited the potential rezoning as supportive of granting the variances. We feel bamboozled. Last hearing we couldn't say it was too big, but now that T3 has been recommended, we can't use the East Grand overlay to object to the size anymore? How can a potential rezoning, one that hasn't even been granted, be used to justify variances from the more restrictive overlay district? When there are two zoning districts, the more restrictive applies."

Elysia Gallo, a renter and neighbor on Osceola, participated in public meetings with Summit Hill Association. She feels that the district council did not listen to neighbors. "I have to tell you, it is beyond frustrating to attend these Zoom meetings where our concerns are simply not

heard, or talked over. What I heard at the meetings: people want more affordable housing. They want more racial equity. What we need are more affordable options that provide homes to a variety of working families, not luxury investment units. We need a safe and walkable city, not a behemoth that will force people to search for parking and have blind garage exits just feet from the sidewalk where pedestrians and children travel. We need to encourage development, yes -- but development at a scale that is compatible with OUR neighborhood.”

She continues, "What we love about our neighborhood is its historic charm. It feels like the heart of Saint Paul, not just for its business district, but for the grandeur of the brownstones and Victorian mansions that extend far beyond just Summit Avenue. It is walkable, pleasant, and charming. We do NOT want Grand Avenue to become a copycat of University or Snelling. We do not want to see a building take up more space than it is allowed by existing zoning codes and the East Grand Avenue Overlay. We want more mixed-use housing (specifically: affordable housing that is in sync with the neighborhood) but the design as proposed is too big and too tall. If you grant a variance to this project, many more will follow, until the look and feel of our neighborhood is eroded. It is important to not make exceptions as this will create a dangerous precedent.”

Attachment: Email sent to city. Note the response. The City has created impediments after impediment for public comment.