

From: [Jeanne Kruchowski](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#); [Butler, Sonja \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [*CI-StPaul_Contact-Council](#)
Subject: RE: ZF#21-269-061 695 Grand CUP and variances
Date: Tuesday, July 13, 2021 8:38:11 PM

July 13, 2021

RE: ZF#21-269-061 695 Grand CUP and variances

Dear Sirs,

I am Jeanne Kruchowski, a homeowner residing at 722 Summit Avenue, St Paul, MN 55105.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed CUP and variances application for 695 Grand Avenue. My objections are the following:

1) The rezoning of a single building plot as proposed is not being undertaken as a part of comprehensive zoning and is intended solely to enable the construction of the 5-story building planned by Saint Albans LLC for 695 Grand Avenue, which will be financially beneficial to the property owners of 695 Grand Avenue but detrimental to the neighborhood as a whole. The proposed construction is excessive in both height and footprint, it lacks appropriate historic granularity, and will destroy the character and uniqueness of Grand Avenue. It will negatively impact the property values of homeowners nearby. I am in favor of new mixed-use construction at the 695 Grand Avenue location, but it must be in keeping with the character of the avenue and in accordance with all current zoning rules. I fully support the existing East Grand Avenue Overlay, and exceptions should not be permitted.

2) When the necessity for exceeding the construction height and volume permitted for the 695 Grand Avenue location was questioned, Ari Parritz of Reuter Walton has stated on multiple occasions that “the numbers simply do not work with a smaller development”. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § 462.357, Subd. 6, however, “Variances may be granted when the applicant for the variance establishes that there are practical difficulties in complying with the zoning ordinance... but“...Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties”. Therefore, the fact that the developers cannot make their numbers “work” with a smaller development is not a valid reason for any rezoning or any height variance(s) to be granted. Their acknowledged difficulty in making their numbers “work” is an admission that the proposed project is **not** the appropriate project for the location.

3) The development as currently proposed for 695 Grand Avenue is incompatible with the City of Saint Paul’s vigorously enforced Heritage Preservation Ordinance (municipal code chapter 73). It is incomprehensible that while owners of nearby residential properties are held to strict guidelines – apparently for the purpose of preserving an area of special historical and aesthetic interest - the City would contemplate rezoning and granting variances that would permit construction at 695 Grand Avenue that would negatively impact the historic, aesthetic, and financial values of the historic properties just a stone’s throw away on St. Albans Street and Summit Avenue.

Respectfully,

JM Kruchowski

722 Summit Avenue

From: [Jeanne Kruchowski](#)
To: [Noecker, Rebecca \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Re: 695 Grand Avenue
Date: Wednesday, June 9, 2021 11:50:39 AM

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

Dear Councilwoman Noecker,

Yes - I would be happy to have my message added to the public comments for the City Council hearing.

thank you,

Jeanne Kruchowski

From: Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul) <Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Sent: Wednesday, June 9, 2021 10:20 AM
To: Jeanne Kruchowski <jwskski@hotmail.com>
Subject: RE: 695 Grand Avenue

Dear Jeanne,

Thank you for sharing your perspective on the proposed redevelopment at 695 Grand Ave. I will be keeping your thoughts in mind when this matter comes to us at the Council.

The developer's application will first be considered by the Summit Hill Association and then by the Planning Commission. If you haven't done so already, I'd recommend that you share your views with the Summit Hill Association by emailing ZLU@SummitHillAssociation.org. You can also share your perspective with the Planning Commission by emailing sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Finally, if you'd like your message below to be part of the public comment for the City Council hearing, please let me know and we will make sure to add it to the record.

Thank you again for reaching out to me.

Best,
Rebecca

Rebecca Noecker | Saint Paul City Councilmember, Ward 2

15 West Kellogg Blvd – Suite 310B | Saint Paul, MN 55102
651.266.8622 | rebecca.noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us

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From: Jeanne Kruchowski <jwskski@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 7, 2021 9:13 PM
To: Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul) <Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: 695 Grand Avenue

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

Dear Councilwoman Noecker,

I am writing regarding the development proposed for 695 Grand Avenue and to urge you to reject the zoning variances and conditional use permits requested by the developers of that property and to defend the East Grand Avenue Overlay District.

Grand Avenue enjoys a reputation as a distinctive commercial location in great part due its traditional 'small town' feeling, which results from the modest scale of the buildings lining the avenue, the variety of relatively small facades, and the human-sized footprints of the buildings. There are not many other locations in the Twin Cities that enjoy the same cachet. An oversized development such as that proposed by the developers for the 695 Grand Avenue location would violate the historic scale, pattern, and aesthetic of the street.

Residents living near Grand Avenue will probably continue to patronize the businesses along there in any case, but if Grand Avenue ends up looking like every other commercial area in the Twin Cities, if the charm is destroyed, if Grand Avenue is no longer a unique destination, what would be the appeal for potential shoppers from outside the neighborhood? A shopping "experience" extends far beyond the financial transaction. You can purchase eyeglasses, ice cream, wine, books, toys, hardware, Christmas trees, wedding dresses, bicycles, etc. in many other commercial locations – Grand Avenue does not have a monopoly on any of that merchandise. What it currently can and does offer is a unique 'small town' environment in which to browse and make all those purchases. It would be shortsighted to destroy the ambiance of Grand Avenue by instituting rezoning, granting variances, or permitting deviation from the EGAOD to enable construction that is out of scale and keeping with the neighborhood and that would be to the benefit of the developers of the proposed oversized complex...but kill the goose that lays the golden egg. I would welcome new development along Grand Avenue, but it must be more sensitive development that takes its cues from and respects the architecture and scale that make Grand Avenue unique.

Grand Avenue urbanized originally with buildings on small parcels of land, which contributes greatly to its scale and charm. The developers of 695 Grand Avenue have repeatedly said that a smaller scale building "won't work", but the existing success and popularity of Grand Avenue clearly proves that assertion to be incorrect. It will, however, require a different type of thinking to design an appropriate, custom solution for the location, instead of what is now being proposed - a monolithic "earth tones and rectangles with balconies" building that one

can find going up with minor decorative tweaks all over the country. Maintaining and enforcing the existing zoning and ordinances can help ensure Grand Avenue's long-term success for the entire neighborhood and for all the many visitors who enjoy the avenue because it offers an experience they cannot find elsewhere.

Respectfully,

Jeanne Kruchowski

722 Summit Avenue

Homeowner