

September 15, 21

SUPPORT OF APPEAL

FILE NUMBER 21-289-699, 695 Grand CUP and Variances

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Council Member Dai Thao:

I am writing to you as a resident of Saint Paul who, like you, believes that Saint Paul needs more affordable housing. You supported the rezoning of 695 Grand Avenue from B2 to T3 with the understanding that the development would provide affordable housing.

But the proposal for 695 Grand Avenue will only provide luxury housing. If you read the letters in support, you will notice that they look forward to new luxury housing in Summit Hill. Not only will the project include **no affordable housing units**, it will drive out naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) that exist in Saint Paul.

The attached August 1 Pioneer Press Letter to the Editor presents this argument emphatically.

As a proponent of affordable housing, please support the appeal and deny the request for all the variances and the CUP.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Bach  
9 Saint Albans Street South  
Saint Paul, MN 55105

## OPINION AUGUST 1, 2021

### **It's**

#### **anti-affordable**

On July 23, the Saint Paul Planning Commission approved the request by the Dixies/695 development team for CUP and variances – so that they could build their intrusive out-of-place massive building even taller – challenging all zoning codes. Summit Hill residents objected that the building as proposed will be highly detrimental to opportunities for affordable housing in the Summit Hill Area.

This building as designed is antiaffordable housing. In addition to sky-high rents, the project contains no publicly funded affordable housing units.

According to the developers at various public meetings, the rent for these new apartments will start at \$1,400 for the smallest units – “alcove” (studio) apartments of around 550 square feet each. Each unit will have its own PTAC heating unit, so residents will pay their heating and cooling on top of their rent. Parking, for those with cars, will cost an additional \$175 per month. One bedrooms will rent at \$1,850 and two-bedroom units \$2,750. The rent in these apartments will be double the going rate in Summit Hill. In the section of Summit Hill where the building will reside, at 695 Grand Avenue, there is a rich mix of middle-density housing types with a wide variety of housing costs — including below-median-rate apartments and condos. The average rent in Summit Hill for a one-bedroom unit is affordable at 50 percent of area median income. The 695 Grand Avenue proposal is luxury housing that will put gentrification development pressure on all of east Grand and lead to the loss of existing NOAH (Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing).

We don't need more luxury housing in Summit Hill. We need more median housing and more affordable housing.

*Marilyn Bach, St. Paul*