

## Comments Received by ward 7 office

**From:** Shannon O'Toole <sotoole.esq@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 14, 2021 11:43 AM

**To:** Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul) <Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Prince, Jane (CI-StPaul) <Jane.Prince@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Brendmoen, Amy (CI-StPaul) <amy.brendmoen@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Thao, Dai (CI-StPaul) <dai.thao@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul\_Ward6 <Ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Tolbert, Chris (CI-StPaul) <chris.tolbert@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Jalali, Mitra (CI-StPaul) <Mitra.Jalali@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Yang, Nelsie (CI-StPaul) <Nelsie.Yang@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul\_Ward1 <Ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul\_Ward2 <Ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul\_Ward3 <Ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul\_Ward4 <Ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul\_Ward5 <Ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul\_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

**Cc:** DeMello, Mariam (CI-StPaul) <Mariam.DeMello@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

**Subject:** Support for Appeal # 21-

Dear Members of the City Council,

I write once again about the 80 units of luxury apartments plus commercial space planned for 695 Grand Avenue. I urge you to grant the appeal and not allow the CUP and variances sought. Other writers have succinctly and clearly set forth the law which mandates that you grant the appeal. Today I will make two points.

First, the City Council hearing on this appeal falls on the commencement of Yom Kippur. If Councilperson Noecker will be unable to attend the hearing due to religious commitments, you should hold over this vote until she is available to participate fully.

Second, having secured rezoning of the 695 Grand parcel, the Keneficks and their developers still do not have enough room to make all of the money they want to make within the confines of the new zoning requirements for which they fought. They have shown not one practical difficulty with the parcel as is: their only difficulty is that they cannot make enough money if they must, like everyone else in the neighborhood, stay within the confines of the zoning law. Mere economic justifications are not sufficient for variances or a CUP.

It is unclear why the council has supported this luxury apartment project in the face of huge neighborhood opposition when the city's need is for affordable housing which this project will certainly lessen on Grand Avenue. Please uphold the law: support the appeal and deny the CUP and variances. Thank you.

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**From:** Elizabeth Gibba <gibbabiz@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 14, 2021 12:04 PM  
**To:** #CI-StPaul\_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Subject:** 695 Grand

I am writing that you vote to DENY the CUP and variance before you today. There are a myriad of facts, laws and guidelines which make this the correct decision. If you've studied the issue to the level it deserves, you each know this is true. The biggest question left unanswered is WHEN will all those facts, laws and guidelines actually matter? This has been an exercise in disregarding those facts, etc and that, combined with the seeming lack of interest or concern for the desires and requests of the countless tax-paying residents who have repeatedly and in large numbers expressed to you, our REPRESENTATIVES, have chosen to dismiss, to ignore, to smile, pat us on the head, and act in disregard for those who will most be impacted by your decision.

Please deny these variances and the CUP. Please listen to your constituents.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Gibba  
568 Grand Ave, St Paul, MN 55102  
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Liz Gibba  
651.747.7172

**From:** Sonja Mason <sonjainfo@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 14, 2021 10:25 AM  
**To:** #CI-StPaul\_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Subject:** Oppose CUP and Variances 695 Grand; SUPPORT OF FILE NUMBER 21-289-699, 695 Grand CUP and Variances Appea

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

Councilmember Prince,

Thank you for your support of the St Paul citizens and the zoning code in opposing the rezoning for 659 Grand. In regard to FILE NUMBER 21-289-699, 695 Grand ("Dixies") CUP and Variances Appeal, please stay the course and **support the appeal and deny the CUP and variances.**

Below I am including information I sent to other councilmembers and the mayor's office, urging them to deny the CUP and variances.

Sincerely,  
Sonja Mason  
St Albans St S

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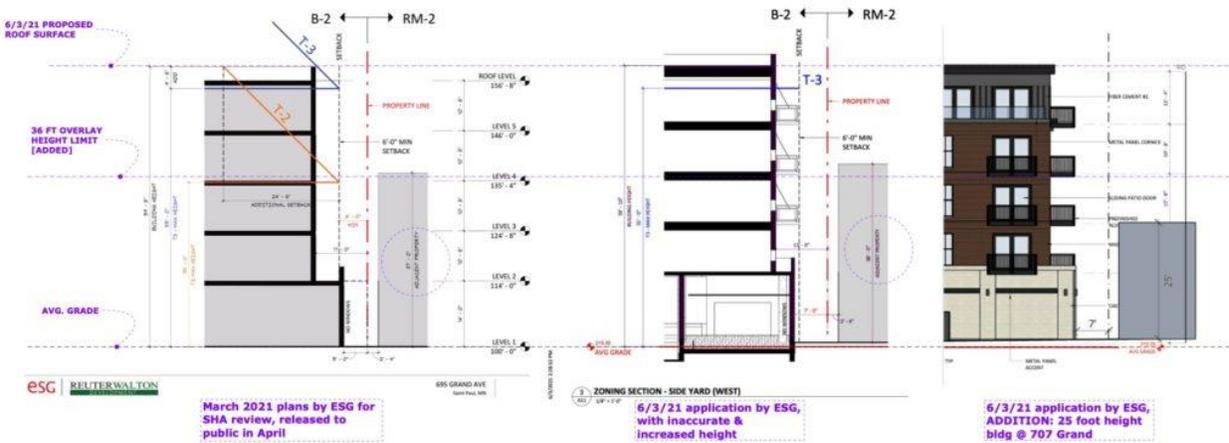
There are many law-based and fact-based reasons to oppose these variances, which you hopefully have read in all the letters and voicemails received from renters, homeowners, businesses and employees from all over St Paul. I wanted to bring up an issue that I think has been overlooked, which is how the dismissive and disingenuous the development team has been of the neighborhood context. Specifically, ESG and RW have repeatedly **presented inaccurate information pertaining to the heights and setbacks of surrounding properties**. In every case, buildings were presented as taller or with smaller setbacks than they have in reality. These inaccuracies were pointed out to them during and after each of the public zoom meetings, but were not corrected. In one telling case, the inaccurate representation of the neighbor has taller than it reality was changed—it was *increased*. (See attachments)

Similarly, in the face of the overwhelming feedback from neighbors that the building was too tall and too massive, the development team chose to increase the building height. At the 6/8/21 community meeting, held via Zoom and hosted by Summit Hill Association, ESG architect Bob Loken said, "The building didn't get shorter," to describe that, in fact, the developer made the building 3.5 feet taller from their community outreach meetings and the final, presented design. Note that the increase in height was driven by even taller ceiling heights for the main floor and the penthouse, as well as an insensitive response to the gradual slope of the site. The project has 9+ foot ceilings on all levels and 14 to 16 heights on the main floor. Do high ceiling heights "needed" to charge luxury-priced rents justify a [variance](#)? Are 8-0 ceilings a hardship?

Sincerely,  
Sonja Mason  
21 St Albans St S

#### ATTACHMENTS

This building at 707 Grand is located directly west of 695 Grand (you can see the teal-colored wall of Emmett's on the right of the photos) is a 2-story 25 foot tall building. It was represented in the submission to the city as 37 feet tall and then amended to be 38 feet tall.



Attached is a PDF detailing just a few of these misrepresentations, from the [ABetterWay-StP.com](http://ABetterWay-StP.com) website. A Better Way is the neighborhood group that has brought forth the appeal.

Just one example: a letter submitted as public comment from a community member detailing errors in ESG/RW presentation

Council member Prince,

I am writing to you to thank you for your recent support of Saint Paul residents opposition to the 695 Grand request to rezone a small parcel of land from B2 to T3.

You have once again affirmed your reputation as a City Council member that upholds the law. And we are most grateful for that.

Saint Paul residents are now requesting that City Council support the appeal of the Planning Commission's decision to grant the 695 Grand development teams' request for CUP and Variances.

My letter to that effect is attached.

Sincerely,  
Marilyn Bach  
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