

United Village

**Appeal of Planning Commission Decisions
Related to
Hotel and Parking Garage Project**

April 10, 2024 - City Council Meeting

Zoning File #24-022-766



**SAINT PAUL
MINNESOTA**

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Applications and decisions being appealed

1 Conditional Use Permit for additional height – Approved w/ conditions

4 Variances related to building placement

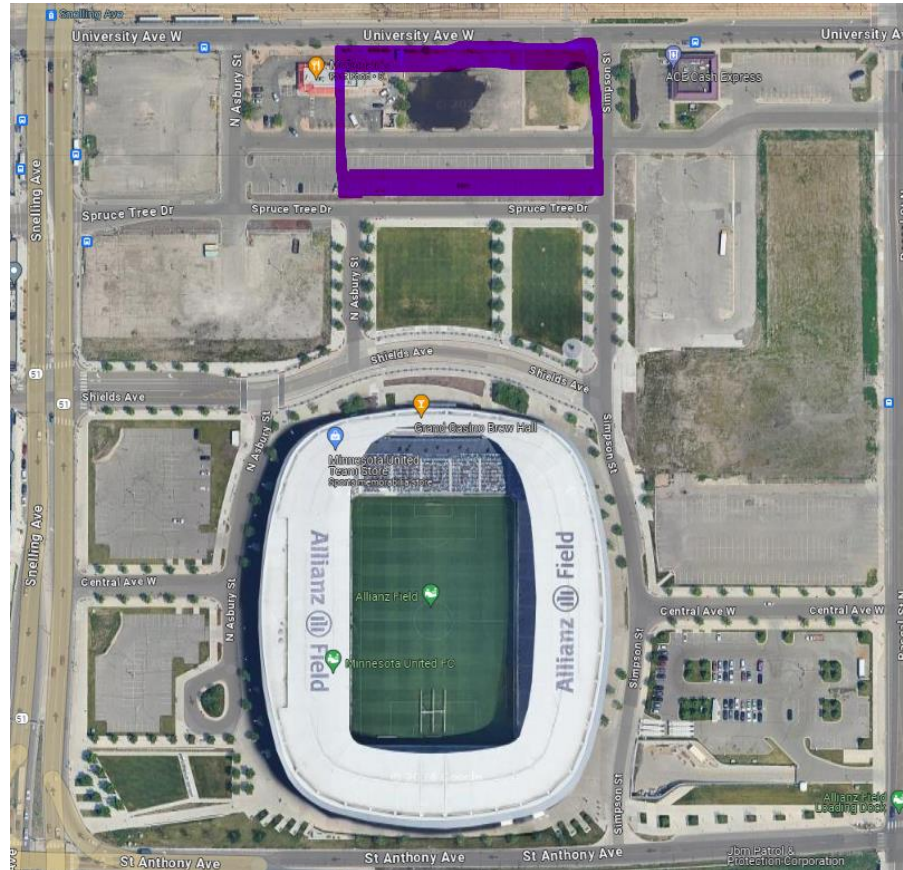
1. Stepping back the building - Approved w/ conditions
2. Front yard setback - Approved w/ conditions
3. Entrance drive to occupy more than 60' of lot frontage - Denied
4. Anchoring the corner - Approved w/ conditions

4 Variances related to windows, doors, and building articulation

5. Window and door openings west wall (15%) - Approved w/ conditions
6. Window and door openings west wall– ground floor – Approved w/ conditions
7. Window and door openings east wall– ground floor - Approved w/ conditions
8. Building façade articulation for bottom 25' of east wall– Approved w/ conditions



Hotel and Parking Garage Site





Project Site and Surrounding Area

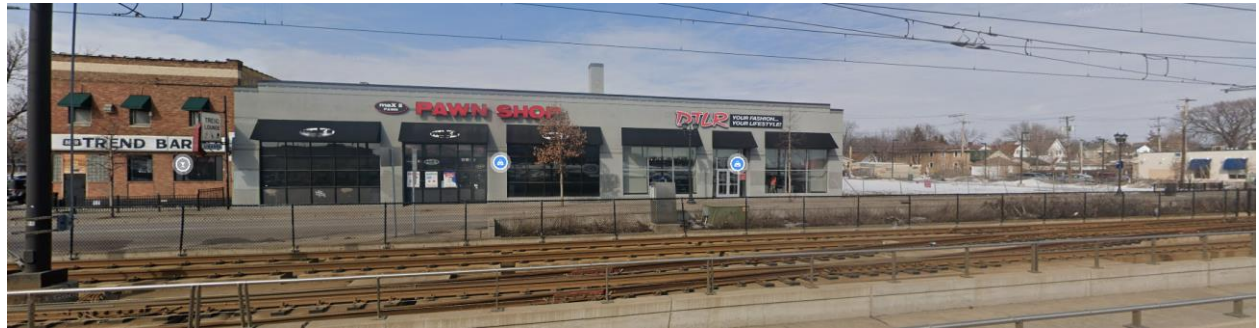
Project Site

- Vacant land



North of Project Site

- Green Line
- Retail uses





Surrounding Properties



East towards Pascal Street

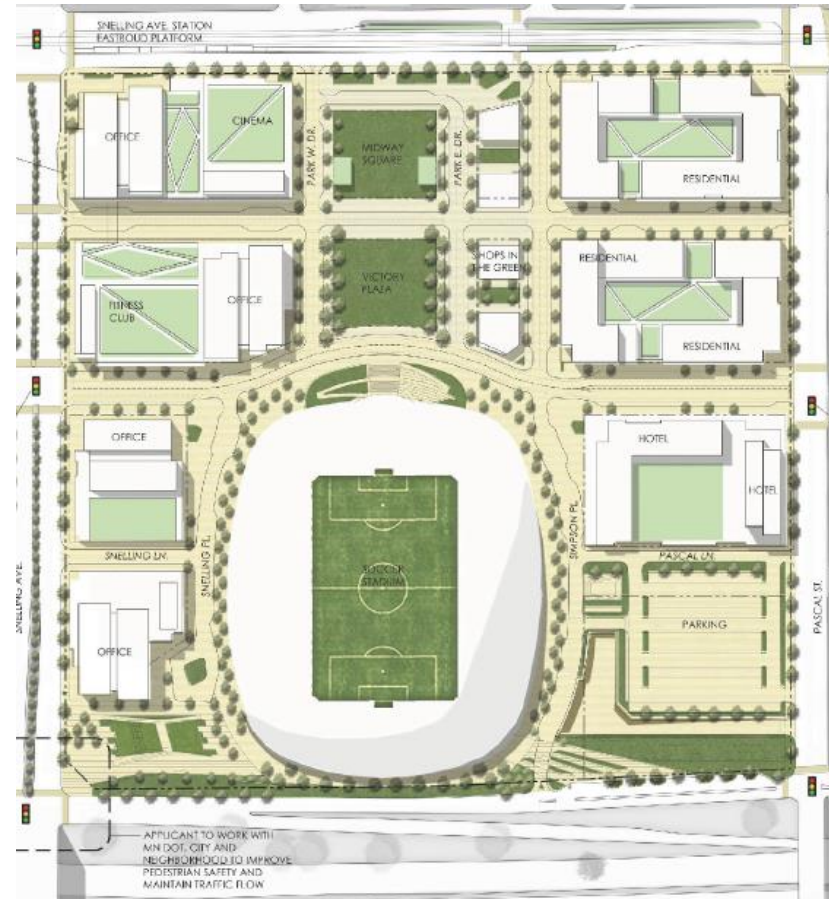


West towards Snelling Avenue



Master Plan – Adopted by the City Council in 2016

- New streets and sidewalks to break up the “Super Block” into individual development blocks
- Flexibility for the types of land uses, location of uses, and intensity of land uses
- Land use determined by market forces
- Master plan has minimum requirements for land uses
 - 248 dwelling units
 - 250K office space
 - 168K retail





Hotel and Parking Garage and Other Phase 1 Projects

Hotel

- 8 stories
- Up to 160 guest rooms
- Primary entrance on University – one way westbound
- Direct pedestrian connection to sidewalk
- Restaurant/lounge entrance on Asbury
- Terrace and open space south of hotel

Parking Garage

- 5 stories
- 300 stalls
- Entrance on Simpson
- Loading/trash on Simpson

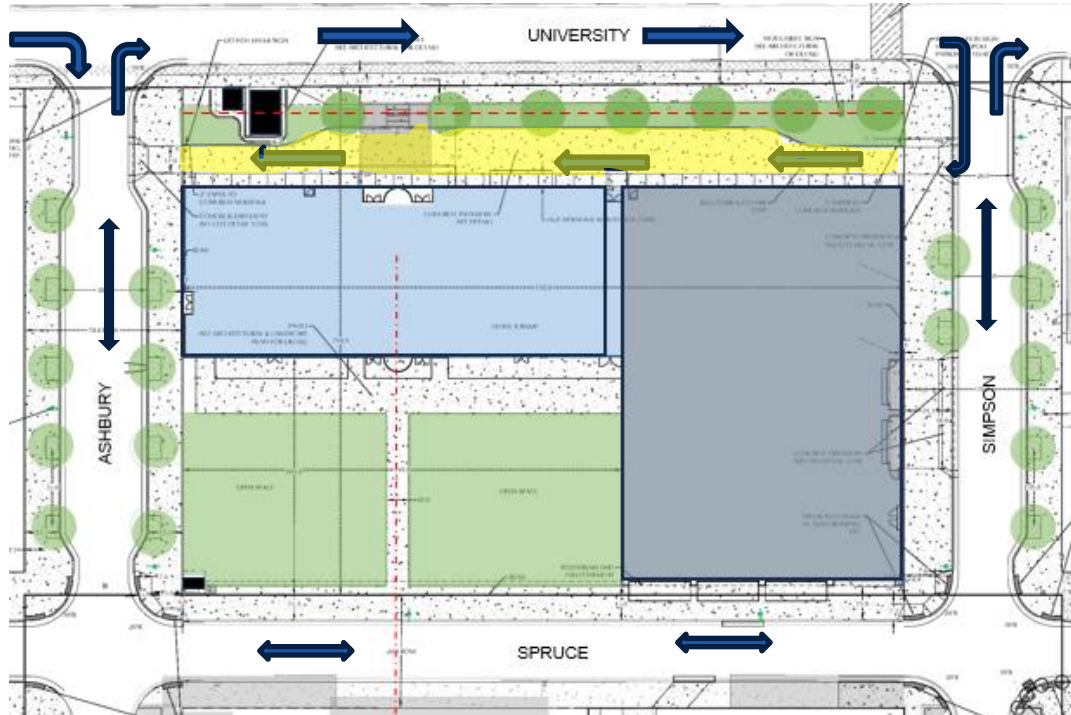
Other Phase 1 Projects

- Office building and temporary surface parking lot
- Restaurants east of the Great Lawn
- Sculpture plaza at Snelling & University
- Playground east of the stadium





Site Plan



- One-way westbound entrance drive
- Drop-off/pick-up lane
- Bypass lane to the north
- No parking in the entrance drive
- “No Parking” signage
- Direct pedestrian connection to sidewalk
- “Do Not Enter” sign at Ashbury



Floor Plan – Ground Floor





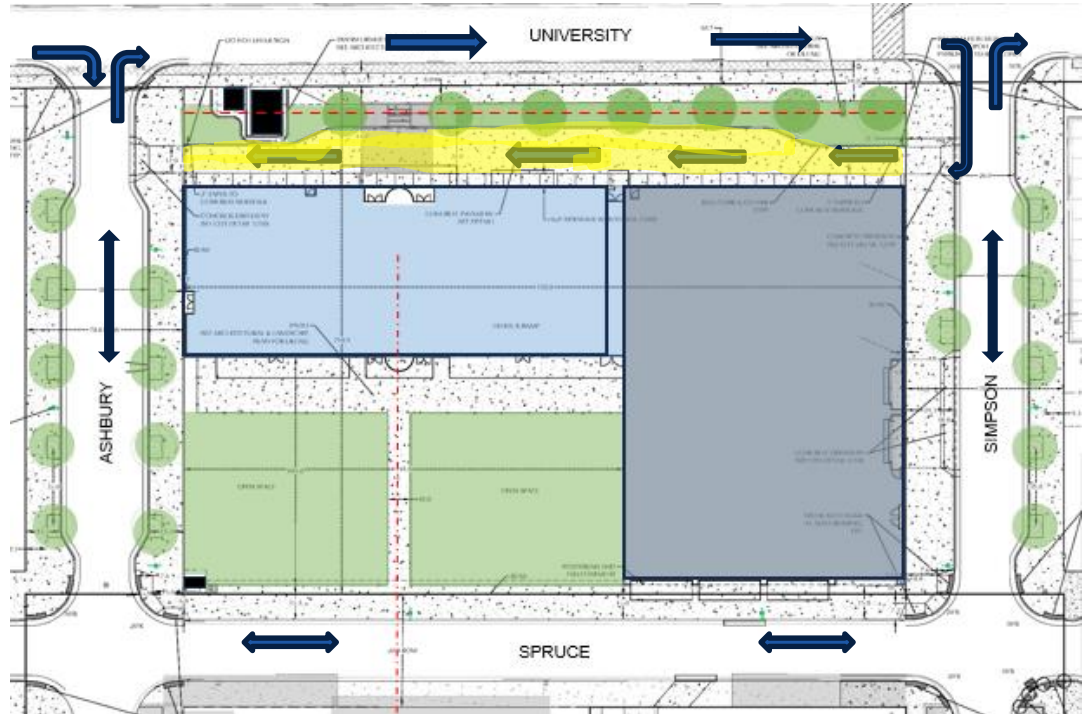
Hotel and Parking Garage





Variance #3 – Entrance Drive along University

- Zoning Code limits driveway to 60' of lot frontage and 322' proposed for a variance of 262'
- Controlled access
- Utility boxes on University
- Side street access
- One-way westbound
- Drop-off/pick up lane
- Bypass lane
- No parking/No Not Enter Signs





Variance Findings from Zoning Code Sec. – 61.601

- a) The variance is in **harmony with** the general purposes and intent of **the zoning code**.
- b) The variance is **consistent** with the **comprehensive plan**.
- c) The **applicant has established that there are practical difficulties** in complying with the provision, that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the provision. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.
- d) The **plight of the landowner** is due to circumstances unique to the property **not created by the landowner**.
- e) The variance will **not permit any use that is not allowed** in the zoning district where the affected land is located.
- f) The variance will **not alter the essential character** of the surrounding area.



Variance #3 – Planning Commission Findings in Denying Variance

- a) Entrance drive is vehicle-focused and does not provide safe and efficient circulation of all modes of transportation, including transit, pedestrian and bicycle traffic and is not in harmony with the Zoning Code.
- b) Entrance drive is contrary to comprehensive plan policies that call for: 1) focus on pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit; 2) high quality pedestrian urban design; 3) pedestrian-friendly streetscapes.
- c) Decision to site the driveway parallel to University Avenue is a choice made by the applicant and does not constitute a practical difficulty.



Variance #3 – Staff and Zoning Committee Findings Recommending Approval

- a) Direct access from University is not allowed, the driveway is in harmony with the zoning code intent of ensuring convenience of access to property
- b) Comprehensive plan policies call for 1) minimizing and consolidating curb cuts and using side street access and 2) high-quality urban design that supports pedestrian friendliness and enhances the public realm
- c) Access management from county and city policies create practical difficulties as does presence of utility boxes along University

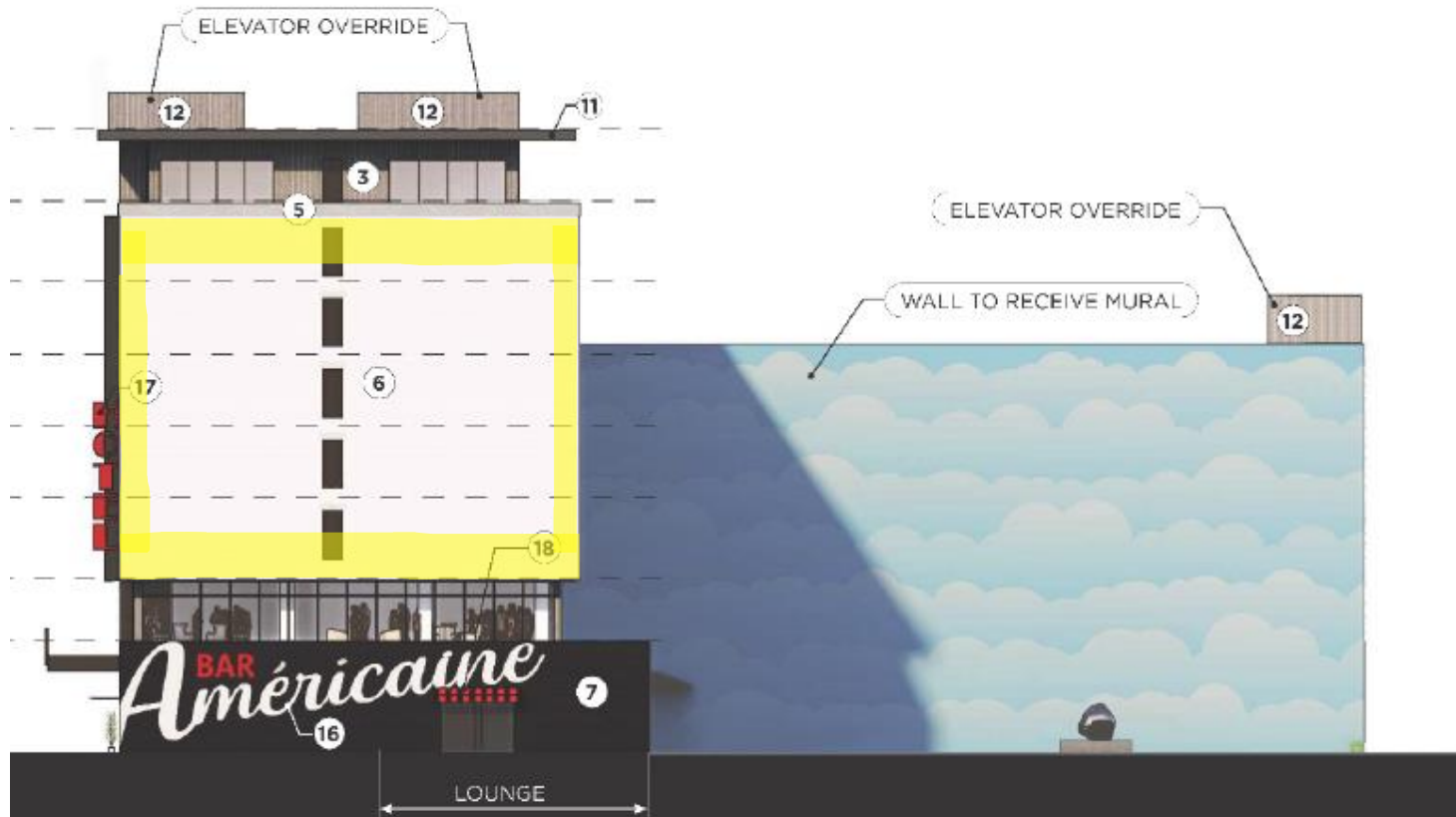


Conditions Recommended by Staff and Zoning Committee

1. Final plans approved by the Zoning Administrator for this use shall be in substantial compliance with the plans submitted and approved as part of this application.
2. The United Village Final Plat shall be approved by the City Council and recorded with the county recorder and/or registrar of titles.
3. The driveway shall be for **one-way westbound** traffic only. Signage shall be installed indicating that **no parking** is permitted in the driveway and that the driveway is for check-in/check-out, pick-up/drop-off, and valet only. Signage shall indicate stopping in the bypass lane is prohibited.
4. The driveway shall be for **passenger vehicles** only as the site design cannot accommodate turning movements for larger vehicles.
5. There shall be a **direct pedestrian connection** between the sidewalk along University Avenue and the primary hotel entrance. The connection shall be reviewed and approved by Public Works.
6. There shall be a **landscape buffer** between the sidewalk along University Avenue and the driveway.
7. There shall be a **sidewalk width of 18'** along University Avenue.
8. The **owner/operator is solely responsible for ensuring the driveway operates in a safe manner for all users and does not result in adverse impacts to the public road system**. If the owner/operator is unable to manage the driveway in a safe manner that avoids adverse impacts to the public road system the City reserves the right to require closure of the driveway access points at the cost of the owner/operator. The owner/operator must at all times maintain an operating plan for the driveway and must provide it to the City upon request. This initial plan must be reviewed and approved by the Public Works Traffic Engineer during site plan review. Specifics to be addressed shall include: 1) document protocols, enforcement, and signage to limit the driveway to passenger vehicles, to manage the bypass lane, to prohibit parking and ultimately to assure no adverse impacts to the public road system; 2) quantify driveway use, frequency, volume, and peak times, etc.; 3) document how Metro Mobility, delivery vehicles, limousines, buses etc. will be accommodated and serve the site without adversely impacting the public road system.



Variance #5 - West Wall of Hotel Portion of Building



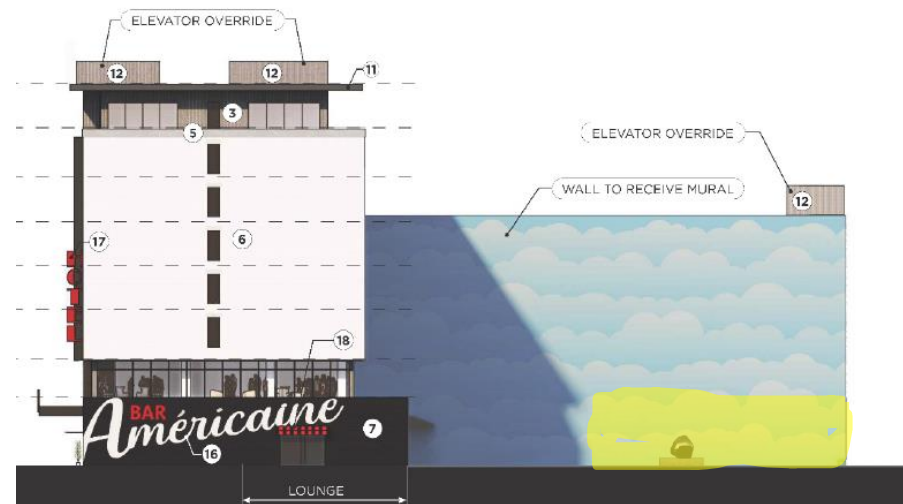


Variance #5 Conditions – Windows on West Wall of Hotel

1. Final plans approved by the Zoning Administrator for this use shall be in substantial compliance with the plans submitted and approved as part of this application.
2. The United Village Final Plat shall be approved by the City Council and recorded with the county recorder and/or registrar of titles.
3. A wall graphic and lighting shall be installed on the west façade of the hotel portion of the building; this façade shall be lit at dusk.
4. A mural shall be installed on the west façade of the parking garage portion of the building within one year of the issuance of the certificate of occupancy. The mural shall be lit at dusk.
5. Additional openings shall be added to the west façade of the hotel building on floors 3 through 7.



Variance #6 West Wall of Parking Garage – ground floor doors/windows





Floor Plan – Ground Floor





Variance #6 Conditions– – West Wall of Parking Garage

1. Final plans approved by the Zoning Administrator for this use shall be in substantial compliance with the plans submitted and approved as part of this application.
2. The United Village Final Plat shall be approved by the City Council and recorded with the county recorder and/or registrar of titles.
3. A wall graphic and lighting shall be installed on the west façade of the hotel portion of the building; this façade shall be lit at dusk.
4. A mural shall be installed on the west façade of the parking garage portion of the building within one year of the issuance of the certificate of occupancy. The mural shall be lit at dusk.
5. Additional design treatments/elements and articulation to activate the hotel portion of the west façade shall be added. Design treatments/elements and articulation that relate to the human scale may include but are not limited to, plantings, street furnishings, canopies/awnings/projections, lighting, doors/windows, texture, ornamentation, and architectural detail. The adequacy of the treatments shall be determined by the Zoning Administrator during review of the site plan.
6. A connection between the ground level retail space in the parking garage and the open green space to the west shall be provided to activate the open green space. The adequacy of the connection and activation shall be determined by the Zoning Administrator during review of the site plan.



Approve or Deny Appeal of Variance #3

- **Approve the Appeal** of Variance #3 – this means that you *disagree* with the Planning Commission and want to allow the entrance drive as planned. An approval should include the eight conditions recommended by staff.
- **Deny the Appeal** – this means that you *agree* with the Planning Commission that the variance for the entrance drive should be denied, and the project will not move forward as planned.



Approve or Deny Appeal of Condition of Variance #5

- **Approve the Appeal** – this means that you *disagree* with the Planning Commission and want to remove the condition for more windows.
- **Deny the Appeal** – this means that you *agree* with the Planning Commission and want to keep the condition for more windows.



Approve or Deny Appeal of Condition of Variance #6

- **Approve the Appeal** – this means that you *disagree* with the Planning Commission and want to remove the condition for windows and/or doors on the mural wall.
- **Deny the Appeal** – this means that you *agree* with the Planning Commission and that the applicant should include windows and/or doors on the mural wall.



Comments Received

- 5 letters in support – including Union Park District Council
- 0 in opposition

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