

August 4, 2015

The Duluth City Council
330 City Hall
411 West First Street
Duluth, MN 55802

RE: Appeal of the Planning Commission Decision to Approve a Special Use Permit for a Townhome Development at Mississippi Avenue and Lyons Street

Dear Members of the City Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments about the matter referenced above.

We have lived in this neighborhood for over 35 years and have consistently supported development of this area as a number of family homes were sold and became rentals and group homes, UMD, Aftenro, the telephone company, and Northwoods Children's Home expanded, and the Unitarian Church joined the neighborhood.

We are excited about the Blue Stone development and look forward to the one that will be built on Kenwood Avenue and Arrowhead Road as we see that these changes make sense and will have a long lasting positive impact on the city.

That said, after attending all the planning commission meetings regarding these proposed townhouses, we do **not** support this development. Our concerns are consistent with those voiced by our neighbors to the Planning Commission over the past year.

Density and Logistics:

The land on which the developer wants to build does not seem large enough to support the number of renters he is proposing.

Increased residential car traffic will likely present challenges for snow plowing/removal, mail delivery, trash collection, and street maintenance because Lyons Street here is so short and steep.

There is also a safety concern for bikers and walkers who must share the road with cars because there are no sidewalks.

The proposed project would be better suited to an area along Kenwood Avenue between St. Scholastica and the current apartment buildings where it is easier for residents to get in and out of the property

Quality of Construction and Long-term Sustainability of Property Values:

The plans and designs the developer brought to the planning commission over the past year appear to be consistent with the construction grade, style, and materials he used on his first townhouse project on Chester Way and because they look like "housing projects" instead of high end townhomes, they don't fit the neighborhood.

This developer has a history of not providing the planning commission with things they requested, has not followed through on a number of their suggestions, has missed several deadlines, and his first townhome project had some major deficiencies, so we are concerned that if the proposed townhomes are constructed, their property value and the values of other nearby properties may not hold their value over time.

We would support development of this property if the structure looked more like the homes in this neighborhood, it were made of materials consistent with higher end housing--not construction grade, and wasn't trying to fit so many renters in so small a space.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

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