

From: Ruth Kivisto – property owner at 2418 Jefferson Street
Date: August 30, 2015
Re: regarding the Rezoning proposal at 2421 London Road (agenda item #34)

Dear Councilors:

I am against the rezoning of the property at 2421 London Road.

As a property owner sharing 25 feet of common property line with the lot seeking to be rezoned, I want to you to know that a vibrant neighborhood fills this area. Once a foothold of business is established, a slippery slope is created that allows for more business to creep in, changing the dynamics of the neighborhood. Only hindsight shows how long it takes for bigger change to happen; so **I urge foresight in this matter**. There are other places a business can be established, especially when the current areas zoned for business are not saturated in Duluth.

I believe it is important to note and bring to your attention the following:

1. The Planning Commission staff report states, “Two phone calls were received from neighbors. No other public, agency, or City comments have been received.”
 - **This was not updated to indicate that at least 3 letters were received and 5 residents of the neighborhood spoke at the Planning Commission meeting *against* the proposed change.** Despite it being summer vacation and a short time frame for residents to respond, there is interest and concern in the neighborhood.
2. Duluth currently has a housing shortage for *market rate workforce housing*.
 - From the 05/06/2014 *Duluth Workforce Housing Study*:
 - i. “The Workforce Housing study indicates that the current housing stock does not meet the needs of our workforce population.”
 - ii. “Housing is a priority for Duluth officials.”
 - In the April 2014 *Executive Summary of Workforce Housing Needs in Duluth, MN*, there are many notations about the need for affordable housing, both for ownership and rent.

The 2400 block between London Road and Jefferson Street *IS* the type of housing that is attractive to professionals making \$40,000 to \$70,000 per year. Why eliminate housing that fits what the city is seeking to have more of?

3. To rezone a residential neighborhood requires involvement on the part of those voting for the change. **I urge you to postpone a vote on this crucial amendment until you have visited the area and have information on how rezoning affects this neighborhood.**
 - Point #5 in the Planning Commission staff report notes: “Because the application does not contain a petition with 2/3 of surrounding property owners, this will require a super majority vote of the city council to approve it (as opposed to the standard requirement of a simple majority vote).”
 - i. 2/3 of 9 council members is 6
 - ii. 2/3 of 31 households in the affected area (within 350 ft of the property) is 21

The odds are stacked against the 31 households in the immediate neighborhood rather than against the one proposed individual seeking rezoning.

- **It is much more difficult to attain 21 (of 31) supporting signatures from people adversely affected by the change than it is to have 6 (of 9) non-neighborhood members vote in support of change.** I strongly urge you to visit the neighborhood before you vote on the amendment to change the zoning. **The impact of your vote will be felt.**

4. There is sufficient available property already zoned for business nearer downtown on/near London Road and thus **there is no warranted need to rezone traditional residential property.**
5. During the Planning Commission meeting, it was discussed that the clients to this proposed business depend on the bus line on which the property is situated. This was noted after public comment was closed so the neighbors in attendance were not allowed to correct the statement. This property is NOT on a bus line. The closest bus line is four blocks up the hill on Superior Street. Thus, **erroneous information was on the table when making the decision whether or not to recommend the rezoning change.**

A neighborhood is a community. It is a fragile system. I urge you to consider and value how fragile yet vital the neighborhoods in Duluth are. Within neighborhoods, a living, vibrant ecosystem of sorts is thriving. Please value this! Do not allow rezoning that will, inevitably, establish a slippery slope of business sprawl.

I urge you to move such that 2421 London Road **NOT** be rezoned to MU-N. Please keep it as R-1.

Thank you.

Regards,

Ruth Kivisto