

From: Katie Krikorian [mailto:katie.krikorian@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, August 05, 2015 9:54 AM
To: Council
Subject: Townhouse development on Mississippi and Lyons streets

Dear City Councilors:

I am writing to ask that you override the recent approval by the Planning Commission of a special use permit to build townhouses on the corner of Mississippi Ave. and Lyons Street in the Kenwood neighborhood near UMD. This issue will come before you on Monday, August 10th.

The proposed development is far too dense for the neighborhood and I believe you would agree with the neighbors if you looked closely into this. At the Planning Commission meeting on June 9th, instead of listening to the neighbors' legitimate concerns, several members of the Planning Commission made repeated accusations that the neighbors were bigoted against renters. It appeared to me that they approved the special use permit more to teach neighbors a lesson on tolerance than on the merits of the proposal. The developer's proposal was so insufficient that 11 provisions were attached to it.

At least 30% of the neighborhood is rental and we have a nice mix of all incomes, family situations, and ages in our neighborhood. I live in a very modest 2-bedroom home. I have had student/renter neighbors for 30 years and have always gotten along with everyone.

The fact that the majority of people at that meeting on June 9th were there to protest this townhouse project and not the other development before the commission, which was Kenwood Village, an apartment building with 83-85 units speaks volumes. I don't think we neighbors are anti-renter or anti-student, but we like the rural, peaceful character of our neighborhood which is a haven amidst all the hustle and bustle of the colleges and shopping center and TRAFFIC that surrounds us.

Regarding safety, the only entrance and exit to the building would be off of Lyons Street, a very narrow and steep street. Some of the planning commissioners kept "poo-pooing" the safety issue for traffic regardless of the testimonies of neighbors about the difficulty traversing the street in winter. Lyons Street also has a group home for disabled adults, and Northwoods Children's Services has a group home on Mississippi. The youth and people in these homes are all pedestrians that would have to cope with at least 20-30 additional cars coming and going each day in the small stretch of road between College Street and Lyons – where there are no sidewalks.

The density of this project is totally inappropriate for our neighborhood and the spirit of the comprehensive development plan - something Duluth residents worked very hard on - and it would set a precedent for "spot zoning." I understand about the "university overlay" on the comprehensive plan in my neighborhood - and this project may be suited for a major thoroughfare such as Kenwood Avenue, but not on narrow side streets like Lyons & Mississippi.

I want to emphasize to you how important it is to keep R-1 zoning in tack for people who want to live in traditional neighborhoods of single family homes - and that includes people who prefer to rent a house rather than buy one. I used to rent, and I always rented a single family house.

I also want to point out something I know you know – apartments are NOT allowed in R-1 neighborhoods, but this project will be operated like an apartment building. The developer wants a license for multiple bedrooms for unrelated people, not for single families. The developer did not even design the building to LOOK like separate townhouses, but one gigantic building. Even one of the planning commissioners kept referring to the project as "apartments."

If the special use permit is allowed for this project how can future Duluth residents who want to live in an R-1 zoned neighborhood feel confident that the fabric of the neighborhood won't be unexpectedly, randomly and detrimentally altered? PLEASE do not allow this townhouse project to continue in this location.

Thank you for "listening" and considering my request.

Sincerely,

Katie Krikorian

1313 Missoui Ave.