

**Macalester-Groveland Community Council
Housing and Land Use Committee
Special Meeting – August 25, 2017, 4:30PM**

Attendees: Sam Walling (chair), Tom Dietsche (acting secretary), Marc Manderscheid, Meg Arnosti, Ben Mingo, Peter Vitko, Cathy Plessner, Jack Fei, Gina Berglund, John Rozek, Michelle Berg, Britta Sherril (MGCC staff).

Note: due to the early start time, some attendees were unable to arrive until after the meeting started and so they were not involved in the discussion and voting on the first agenda topic.

The meeting was called to order by chair Sam Walling at 4:30 PM.

Committee and audience members introduced themselves and their roles.

Tom Dietsche was appointed acting secretary, as the regular secretary was not yet present.

This being a special meeting, most usual agenda items were omitted, including consideration of the prior month's minutes, agenda changes, introductory comments about HLU's role, updates, announcements and other business. The agenda contained two variance requests.

1315 Juliet Avenue – Variance Requests

- Owners plan to build a 2-story addition to an existing 2-story single-family home.
- Requesting 2 minor variances: a 1.5' height variance and a 1.75' front setback variance.
- After a presentation by the homeowners and a brief committee discussion, no concerns were expressed from committee members.
- A motion was made by Marc Manderscheid and seconded by Gina Berglund:
"The Housing and Land Use Committee of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council recommends approval of both requested variances for 1315 Juliet Avenue, file# 17-068815."
- The motion passed by a vote of 7-0 with one abstention.

280 Mississippi River Blvd South – Variance Request

- The current lot is 160' wide and is in an R2 zone, which requires 60' lot widths.
- This lot formerly held the Stonebridge mansion, which was demolished many years ago.
- The only remaining structure from that mansion is the stone bridge, which has historic significance but is not formally registered. It has been recently repaired (re-mortared).
- Under a currently proposed sale, the new owner would split this into two lots:
 - A 95' lot containing the existing home, which may be preserved or torn down.
 - A new 60' lot (that contains the stone bridge) on which to build a new home.
- To preserve the stone bridge, the proposed new house and garage on the new lot would be built close to the east edge of the lot and would require a rear yard setback variance. A 25' setback is required by code, and a 10' setback is proposed, for a variance of 15'.
- The current owner and neighbors all value the stone bridge and wish to preserve it.

- Adjacent homes are also built very close to the alley on the east (rear) lot line.
- After a presentation by a representative for the owners, the committee discussed a number of points and concerns, including the following:
 - The sale has not been finalized and there are no legal agreements in place yet.
 - The buyer has not decided whether to replace the existing home or keep it.
 - While the parties wish to preserve the bridge, this is not yet part of any contract.
 - No site plans or drawings for any structures on the new lot were presented.
 - A setback variance might not be needed, depending on the size of the new home.
 - The city may be investigating possible wetlands status for this property.
 - It is unclear if the city can or should grant a variance when the sale, the lot split, and plans for any proposed new structure have not yet been completed.
 - While preserving the stone bridge seems desirable, a variance may be premature.
- A motion was made by Marc Manderscheid and seconded by John Rozek:

“The Housing and Land Use Committee of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council recommends denial of the requested rear yard setback variance for 280 Mississippi River Blvd South, based on a lack of information.”
- The motion passed by a vote of 9-0 with two abstentions.
- A subsequent motion was made by Jack Fei and seconded by Tom Dietsche, to be submitted to the BZA along with the prior motion on this issue:

“The Housing and Land Use Committee of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council encourages preservation of the stone bridge on 280 Mississippi River Blvd South.”
- The motion passed by a vote of 10-0 with one abstention.

There being no other business, the special meeting was adjourned at about 5:15 PM.