



HOUSING AND LAND USE COMMITTEE MEETING

Macalester-Groveland Community Council

Wednesday, May 22nd – 6:30 p.m.

Groveland Rec Center, 2021 St. Clair Avenue

Attendees:

Brian Baird	Wendy Merrell
Tom Dietsche	Mike Moore
Jack Fei	David Pasiuk
Colin Fesser	Cathy Plessner
Alexa Golemo	Cindy Radtke
Gene Johnson	Mark Seuntjens
Kate Baxter-Kauf	Tim Schmidt
Kathryn McGuire	

AGENDA

6:30 I. Introductions

Mike spoke to the goals, process and responsibilities of the committee. All committee and staff members in attendance introduced themselves

We welcomed a new member, Gene Johnson

6:35 II. Addition/Deletion of agenda items

None

**6:37 III. Approval of April 2019 meeting & May 2019 special meeting minutes
Approved**

Both meeting minutes were approved by a unanimous voice vote

6:40 IV. 2150 Grand Avenue, Max Schwartzman & Sam Daoud, MCR Property Holdings, LLC.

The property owner is seeking an additional variance for off-street parking setbacks from the rear and west property lines; a setback of 0' is proposed in the rear yard along the alley and 2' from the west property line for a variance request of 4' and 2' respectively.

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The HLU Committee previously offered a recommendation on April 17 for a lot size variance request of 2,612 sq ft for 2150 Grand Avenue: *The Housing and Land Use committee recommends approval of the lot size variance request for the property at 2150 Grand Ave, Reference No. 19-026900.*

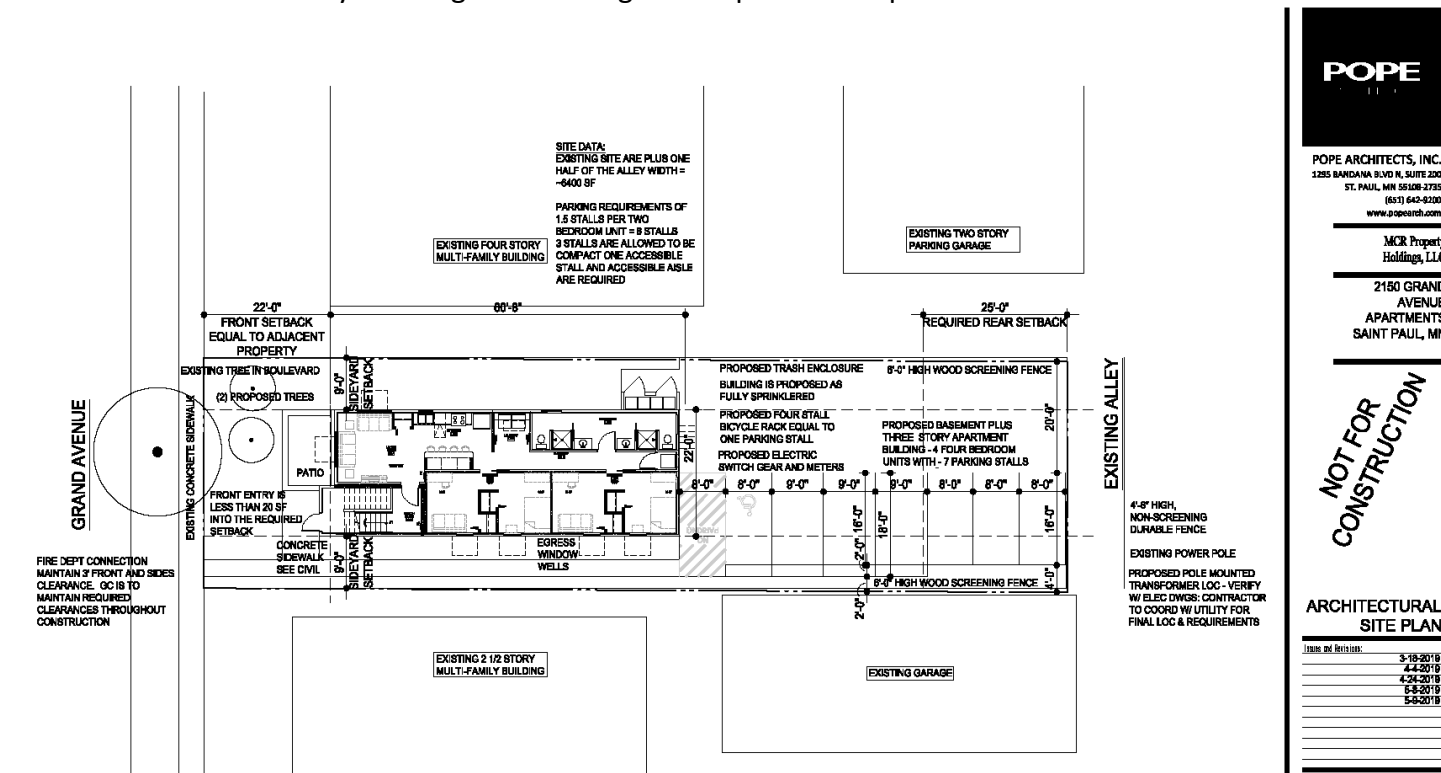
Background:

When the lot size variance request was brought to the BZA, they determined that the staff erred on the number of bedrooms per unit. They felt that the number was 8 instead of the 4 listed. This determination increased the number of parking spaces required to 7 and a bike rack or 8 parking spaces.

The BZA scheduled the presentation of the new plan on May 20th but because the neighbors did not have sufficient time to respond the hearing was postponed until June 3rd.

The required setback from the alley and the building is 4 feet. This property has 0 feet from the alley and 2 feet from the west side, thereby asking for a variance of 4 feet and 2 feet respectively.

The owners of the property could not attend the HLU meeting as they had another commitment. They had previously presented to the HLU committee at the April and May meetings. Following is the updated site plan:



POPE
ARCHITECTS, INC.
1295 BANDANA BLVD N, SUITE 230
ST. PAUL, MN 55108-2735
(651) 642-8200
www.popearch.com

MCR Property Holdings, LLC

2150 GRAND AVENUE APARTMENTS SAINT PAUL, MN

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

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Discussion:

Cathy: Asked what is the surface of the driveway/parking spaces?

- May be black top versus permeable.
- If permeable would be better for the rain runoff

Cindy: Asked where is the next door's garage?

- Tom pointed out that there is a new fence all the way across the property which would stop any damage from that garage.

Mike: Has any neighbors commented on this variance?

- Alexa said that none of the neighbors had commented

Tom & Colin: Didn't see an issue with the setback because of one additional spot being requested

Jack: Expressed that in his opinion it was a waste of time to discuss parking spots

Cathy: Attended the BZA meeting on this topic

- There was a lively discussion on the number of bedrooms
 - Anywhere else in the city the apartments would have been classified as 4 bedrooms
 - Because this is targeted to students it was originally classified as 2 bedrooms
- She spoke to a single mom at the BZA meeting that loved the layout

Dave: His concern is that the zoning moving forward could be made on intentions

Colin: If the driveway would be grass it would at least be healthier

Kathryn: Asked why is there a push for higher density?

- She looked at the rental rate through Market Advisors
 - Highland and Mac Groveland have the lowest density rates in the 7 county area
 - Most apartment buildings have lower than 12 units
 - Most are 4-plexes

Kate: Favors this variance and the project. A few positives that were mentioned

- between two existing apartment buildings
- next to transit
- close to universities for students

Brian: Made the motion--

The Housing and Land Use Committee of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council recommends approval of the variance requests for off-street parking setbacks from the rear and west property lines for the property at 2150 Grand Avenue, Reference No. 19-026900.

Tom seconded the motion.

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Jack: Concerned about BZA variance rules. The rules should be about the property and not the intention of the use.

Cathy: She said that it makes it better that the BZA called out the room discrepancy

- Stacked architecture is new and everyone is trying their best

Mark S: The rules need to look at the situation for each property

- Can meet some of the rules but can't meet all of them
- Not in favor of the project

Wendy: Asked if both variances will be voted on by the BZA? Yes

Vote was taken:

- In favor – 10
- Not in favor – 3
- Abstain - 0

Tom: Suggested that perhaps an informal group from this committee and the transportation committee should discuss parking

- Does not like that the BZA made a decision using “intention”
- Never will get away from point to point transportation
- Convenience and feasibility factor is a need, not just a preference
- Uber-like electric wouldn't need a parking spot

Jack: The transportation committee had a discussion on the psychology of St Paul parking

- Issue this committee can think about
- How much should variances be dependent on transit concerns
- Perhaps a brain storming session is needed

Colin: Consideration is climate change

Mike: Transit is impossible for some people

Dave: With the winter parking restriction this year (parking on even side of the street only) where did all those cars park?

- Argument doesn't want to take away cars
- Friend that is 69 won't give up their car
- Hamline has alleys and driveways with permeable asphalt
- Dave's rain garden can disperse 23 gallons a minute

Brian: There will never be banning of cars, even in the cities

- St Claire and Brimhall packed dirt – not muddy
- Probably not dispersing the water with such packed dirt

Cindy: Happy with the bike racks because it is a little greener

- Keep bike racks in mind

Kate: Dealing with a parking issue variance by variance

- Ad hoc one by one decision
- Important to add consideration

Tim: Rain runoff is an important consideration and should be called out in each variance

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7:45 V. Updates/Announcements

There will be a possible variance coming up which would require a special meeting

1168 Edgcombe Road

- The owner wishes to split the lot
- Would need a lot variance
 - 32 feet wide instead of 40 foot lot requirement
- The neighbors are not concerned

Mike: Only 1 lot spit has been in front of this committee and it was voted down

Jack: He feels that a site plan should be required prior to voting on a lot split

Alexa: Buyer has not reached out to this committee yet

Colin: Question on variance

- Split the land and sell the lot
- Will the buyer know that they will need a variance?

Tom: Should be a conditional purchase agreement

- Suggested that the committee vote on a philosophical proposal, not on a specific variance

Motion:

The Housing and Land Use Committee of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council opposes any lot splits in absence of a site plan and neighbor notification.

Vote was taken:

- In favor – 12
- Not in favor – 0
- Abstain - 1

Special Meetings

May need a special meeting for June 12th

Alexa will let people know by June 7th

A room should be reserved

Having special meetings April, May and June

- Would having these meetings be a change in the bylaws?
- More variances requested in these months because of spring/summer building and renovating
- Easier for committee members to plan on attending if they know in advance that special meetings may be held
- Next year special meetings will be scheduled for April, May and June and then cancelled if necessary

BZA has meetings every other Monday so HLU meetings don't necessarily line up

8:00 VI. Adjourn

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