

5th July, 2015

Mr. Jacob Frey,
City Council Member, 3rd Ward,
City of Minneapolis,

Dear Mr. Frey,

Statement of Reason for Appeal

My name is Stephen Chan. I am the property owner of 1101 7th Street SE, requesting the driveway addition.

My wife, children and I have lived in this property since 1989, almost 26 years. We have grown to love our neighborhood. In the last few years, all of the other families in our immediate neighborhood moved out, and their homes became rental properties. Yet, we remain. Today, in my neighborhood, family-and-owner-occupied homes are practically non-existent. My house retains the appearance of residential character while the other houses around ours are clearly rental properties.

From 1989 up until the last few years, we managed with on-street parking; however, this has become increasingly impossible recently. The reason is the replacement of residential homes with large apartment complexes and student houses in my immediate neighborhood. As a result, on-street parking has become a fierce competition, between house residents, apartment residents and non-resident commuters. The transformation of a 100+ year old residential neighborhood, which was originally designed for family homes, into a predominantly student-occupied neighborhood continues to evolve. Practically all houses have been converted to rental properties, with the majority not in compliance with the R2B/University Area zoning rule that would limit the number of unrelated tenants. Due to safety concerns with the over-crowding burden of street parked vehicles, the City has enforced one-sided street parking, which further limits the available on-street parking spaces. You can imagine the hardship to my family, since we have been totally dependent on on-street parking for 26 years.

This City Map shows the location of my property, which is the yellow high-lighted small property lot at the center. All other properties, even those with lot size similar to mine, already have driveways; but, they existed prior to the establishment of the yard space requirements that pertain to the variances I am requesting for my proposed driveway addition.



The following pictures illustrate the residential off-street parking that is characteristic around my home. These pictures represent the norm for off-street parking observed in my neighborhood. You can see that the City and University Area Overlay District requirements for a driveway outside 5 feet interior side-yard space, vehicles parked greater than 6 feet of a habitable dwelling space and inside the rear 25 feet of a lot are typically not followed.

1. Property address 710 11th Avenue SE is next to the north property line of my home. The cars were parked on the driveway and were outside the rear 25 feet of a lot. The driveway is less than 6 feet from dwelling and less than 5 feet from the property line. The absence of effective screening between the driveway and my home has never caused any issue with my family. The driveway showed an elevation of 2.3 feet, which showed a grading similar for my proposed driveway of 2.4 feet.



n

- Property addresses 1028 7th Street SE and 1020 7th Street SE lie kitty-corner across the intersection from my home. The cars were parked on the driveways next to each of the houses and were outside the rear 25 feet of their lots. Their driveways are less than 6 feet from dwelling and less than 5 feet from the common property line. No effective screening between the driveways and the 2 houses is present.



I understand that these City and University Area Overlay District requirements make perfect sense to limit the further deterioration of the current off-street parking problem observed in the neighborhood, specifically, for recent constructions where modern houses have replaced the original residential properties. However, these requirements were only recently established in a neighborhood where most of the residential properties are constructed over 100 years ago. It is unfortunate that I was not aware when these rules were established whereby a grand-father exception was not included before passing these Ordinances. For large property lots that stretch from the street to the alley, these requirements can easily be met. But for below average sized property lots, these requirements create practical difficulties for the existing homes that do not already have a driveway or parking space. My property is the exception in my neighborhood, as it still does not have off-street parking spaces or a driveway.

The Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association (MHNA), from which I bought my home in 1989, had told me that they had considered adding a driveway to the property. It was the MHNA's desire to convert the former student rental housing to a family residential property. Fifteen years ago, I submitted a proposed driveway plan similar to my current plan, which was approved by the City within a few weeks without the need for any variances to City or University Area requirements. It is unfortunate that I missed the window of opportunity in these time periods, whereby my property lot could have a driveway for parking spaces.

Not being able to park our cars next to our home presents significant hardships for my wife and daughters.

My wife has a dropped foot medical condition and wears a leg brace to walk. She has been diagnosed with a degenerative disc condition in her spine and was ordered by the doctor to follow an eight-pound weight carrying restriction. Unless she can park close to home, she cannot perform such basic tasks as getting groceries from the car. Over the past 25 years, she has possessed a permanent disability parking permit, to allow on-street parking in the restricted space, on the 11th Avenue side of our home. However, the restricted space has recently become an unreliable parking spot for her because other vehicles, with or without proper permit display, often park there during the day, as well as in the evenings and weekends, especially during a TCF stadium event. Also, my home sits across the street from a public park.

Adding a driveway to our home is crucial because it will make our home to become more handicap accessible, since it is a medical fact that chronic degenerative conditions typically get progressively worse with age. The parking space next to our home will reduce the distance and steps she will need to walk from the car.

My two daughters, who graduated from the University of Minnesota, are now nurses. They work evening shifts and arrive home around midnight. They fear for their safety when they have to walk as far as a mile at night from where they could park their cars. You would recall from the news that there has been a spike in crime rates in the university neighborhood over the last couple of years.

As a husband and father, I am obligated to care for the needs of my wife and daughters, which is the reason that I am applying for permission to be allowed to construct a driveway for two off-street parking spaces next to my home. The primary purpose will be for my family to park our vehicles occasionally, when nearby on-street parking is unavailable, especially at night.

Sincerely,

Stephen Chan

Attachment:

Email sent by Melissa C. Bean, Executive Director of Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association (MHNA) with attached Letter of Support from Jan Morse, President of MHNA.

From: Melissa Bean [mailto:office@marcy-holmes.org]

Sent: Friday, June 19, 2015 10:11 AM

To: Widmeier, Janelle A.; fatima.porter@minneapolismn.gov; Frey, Jacob

Subject: 1101 7th St SE Driveway item at Board of Adjustment

Enclosed please find MHNA's letter of support for the variances needed to add a driveway to this property, owned and occupied by the Stephen Chan family. The corner lot size, along with fierce competition for on-street parking, make a strong case for these variances. This item was heard at MHNA's Land Use committee and approved at MHNA's Board meeting June 16th, 2015.

Please enter this letter as part of the public record for the Board of Adjustment hearing June 25th. Thank you.

Melissa C. Bean
Executive Director

[Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association](http://www.marcy-holmes.org) | [612.623.7633](tel:612.623.7633)



MHNA
500 8th Avenue SE
Minneapolis, MN 55414
office@marcy-holmes.org
www.marcy-holmes.org
612-623-7633

June 18, 2015

Members of the Board of Adjustment
Matt Perry, Chair
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: 1101 7th Street S.E. Driveway Variances

Dear Chair Perry:

At its June monthly meeting, the Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association's Land Use and Development Committee heard a presentation by homeowner Stephan Chan, who is proposing to construct a new driveway and curb cut at his single-family home at the address 1101 7th Street S.E.

We understand that Mr. Chan's family have been long term residents at this address and heretofore have not had a driveway, depending instead on street parking. He explained that this has become more difficult due to increased neighborhood parking demands. In addition, he has also expressed a concern for his family's safety, due to the increase in crime, when they have to walk long distances from their parked car to their home at night.

The property is 0.06 acre and on a reverse corner lot. Mr. Chan has been working with the City of Minneapolis Planning Department and determined the following variances, for which he is seeking the neighborhood's support:

- Variance to the side yard setback requirement.
- Variance to park within six feet of a residential structure.
- To allow parking on the driveway.

The Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association supports this project and all three variances. The MHNA Board of Directors approved this action at its June 16, 2015 meeting.

Sincerely,

Jan Morse
MHNA President

Cc: Stephan Chan, 1101 7th Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414