

East Calhoun Community Organization



February 6, 2017

Lisa Bender
Member, Minneapolis City Council
350 South 5th Street, Room 307
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Peter Crandall, City Planner
Community Planning and Economic Development
Public Service Center
250 South Fourth Street, Room 300
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear Ms. Bender and Mr. Crandall:

This letter is to inform you that the board of the East Calhoun Community Organization (ECCO) has voted at its February 2, 2017 meeting to express opposition to the granting of a conditional use permit (CUP), rezoning, and variances for the condominium development on the 3000 block of East Calhoun Parkway. This development is being proposed by CPM Development who has made two presentations to the Livability Committee of ECCO. While we have not yet seen the final proposal to be made to the City, this opposition is based on these presentations and Mr. Crandall's report to the Planning Commission.

CPM Development desires to build a five-story, 61-foot condominium replacing three residential houses at 3017, 3021 and 3025 East Calhoun Parkway. The proposed development would be within the Shoreland Overlay District that in 1988 established a 2.5 story and 35-foot height limit to preserve the character of our community and lakes from excessive building heights. CPM is asking for a CUP to disregard this limit.

Minneapolis Ordinance 525.300 (Purpose of Conditional Use Permits) states that CUPs "may be allowed upon showing that such use in a specified location will comply with all of the conditions and standards of this zoning ordinance". We assert that this development does not comply and there is no good reason to ignore the Shoreland Overlay District Ordinance.

Argumentation has been made that the proposed building would be between two multi-family buildings, but it is also in the most visible part of the Chain of Lakes, across from the Lake Calhoun refectory. Furthermore, the two multi-family buildings mentioned were built in 1916 and 1973, which were well before the Shoreland Overlay District Ordinance was passed to protect our valuable public lakes from being surrounded by excessive building heights.

CPM Development is also asking for rezoning of this parcel to R4, and asking for a variance to exceed the R4 height limit. City Ordinance 525.460 states that the purpose of a variance is “to provide a means of departure from the literal provisions of the zoning ordinance where practical difficulties exist because of conditions or circumstances unique to an individual property”. We assert that no such conditions exist. Also, these properties were previously downzoned to comply with recommended density and height restrictions contained in the adopted Uptown Small Area Plan.

The proposal also asks variances such that the required floor area ratio (FAR) and the minimum lot areas be substantially exceeded, the amount depending on the final proposal. Once again, we do not see a justification for these variances.

The Minneapolis Chain of Lakes is the crown jewel of our park system. If this development were permitted it would make a mockery of the Shoreland Overlay District Ordinance and the Uptown Small Area Plan approved by the City Council in 2008, which supports the Shoreland ordinance. We all know the power of precedence, such that if this project were to be approved there would no way to stop further such tall developments on the parkways surrounding all of our lakes.

We look forward to being able to express ourselves at public hearings and commission and committee meetings regarding this proposed development. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ralph Knox
President, East Calhoun Community Organization
president@eastcalhoun.org

cc: Anita Tabb, President and Commissioner District 4, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

Scott Vreeland, Commissioner District 3, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board