

September 28, 2020

Alex Kohlhaas, City Planner  
City of Minneapolis  
250 South 4th St, Room 300  
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: Minnesota Zen Meditation Center

Dear Mr. Alex Kohlhaas,

ECCO is supportive of the Zen Center requests for variances for parking relief and the remodeled front entrance. The neighborhood concurs with the Zen Center reasoning that replacing a meditative green space with a large parking lot is quite undesirable. However, discussions with neighbors and the Zen Center have revealed some longstanding issues of safety in the alley behind the center. So our full support comes with some caveats to be resolved.

1. The six-car parking area along the alley should be subject to better control to ensure safety in the alley. Ideally this area would be identified as no parking. At a minimum it should be restricted to parking only by Zen Center employees or residents. Our concern is for children who play in their driveways adjacent to the alley and have frequent occasion to have that play extend into the alley itself. Alleys are intended to provide access for local residents and are not designed for public traffic.
2. If the latter (restricted parking) option is chosen by the Zen Center we would like to see them establish a better way to access their property by foot. Currently the Center is accessed on foot through a "lower alley," which is on the private property of a neighbor. A simple no-cost solution would be for the Zen Center to direct all foot access to their new front entrance. This would effectively cover both employees who park on the upper alley and visitors who currently tend to park on 33rd or 34th Streets when they drive.

We consider our long relationship with the Zen Center a positive one and them to be an asset to the neighborhood. We are pleased with their remodeling plans, which effectively address the maintenance and appearance of their building while preserving the contemplative nature of their site. We are confident that we can arrive at a solution to these issues cooperatively.

Sincerely,



Dane Stimart  
President, ECCO Neighborhood Association

cc: City Council President Lisa Bender  
Wayne Moskowitz, Minnesota Zen Meditation Center