

Summit Hill Association

District 16 Planning Council
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MayKao Y. Hang, President and CEO
c/o Wilder Center
451 Lexington Parkway N.,
St. Paul, MN 55104

Dear President Hang,

In our recent conversations with Mary Kay Palmer, we understand that you and the Wilder Foundation would be interested in receiving this letter from the Summit Hill Association (SHA) in regards to the imminent disposition of the old Bush Memorial Children's Home site at 180 S. Grotto. We appreciate your willingness to consider our thoughts on these matters, knowing full well that the sale of this private property does not require the support of our organization; although the City of St. Paul does look to SHA on matter of rezoning or permits. Finally, as you know, the Summit Hill Association (SHA) is the official recognized representative of residents, businesses and property owners in the Summit Hill community.

We recognize the long history of cooperative and community-friendly relations that the Wilder Foundation and the Bush Memorial Children's home has with residents who live near the Grotto site. Your efforts over the years to be sensitive to the surrounding community in the manner in which the Children's Home staff has operated this facility is greatly appreciated.

We also acknowledge and understand that Wilder has assured the community it will include a strong "community-friendly" emphasis in the sealed bid proposal assessment process consistent with its fiduciary obligations in the sale of this property. Hopefully, this assessment criterion will increase the likelihood that the final purchaser and redevelopment project will be both community-friendly and sensitive to the impact any project would have on this quiet urban community of residents surrounding the site.

At the request of neighbors who will be most directly impacted by any future use of the property, SHA recently helped to convene a meeting of residents living within two blocks of the site. At this meeting on October 11th at the Linwood Community Center, neighbors expressed concern about compatibility of future redevelopment with the surrounding homes, including but not limited to concerns about development density, traffic and architecture. St. Paul City Planning Staff members provided residents with relevant zoning information regarding the options for redevelopment under the current R4 zoning designation; as well as likely designations that potential developers might ask for if the property were to be rezoned

Although SHA takes no position on potential options, as nothing specific is yet being proposed, we wish to apprise you of what the residents communicated to us. Nearby concerned residents would strongly prefer that the property remain zoned R4. They would seem to prefer that the property be developed as single family homes built in a manner consistent with the historic nature of the neighborhood. An acceptable alternative, from their perspective, would be for the

property and facilities to be reused by an organization not dissimilar, in many respects, to the Bush program. Such an organization should have the ability to live in as much harmony with the neighborhood as existed with the Bush program.

If there is in the future an application to rezone the property, our assessment is that the neighbors will organize those who live within 350 feet of the property to study the benefits and drawbacks of any such application and make its opinions known to SHA, the Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission and the City Council. They also understand that rezoning is permanent and that once this property is rezoned, the new owners would have the ability to "max out" the zoning limitations, even if the current project proposal is more modest. A proposal for a specified number of condos, for example, under RT2 could be maxed out to 45 (or higher if certain other conditions are met).

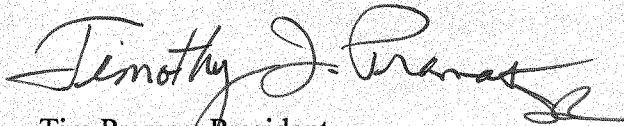
By this time, you have likely received a petition that Kay Raabe and Don Husband prepared which was signed by approximately 180 neighbors. In it they have requested your consideration of the needs of the surrounding neighborhood with respect to density, aesthetics, public safety, noise, traffic and parking. SHA recognizes and echoes the legitimacy of those concerns.

There are several specific things SHA hopes that Wilder will consider leading up to the Oct. 21st opening of sealed bids and the subsequent process of interviews and recommendations.

- That whichever project developer is chosen, that the developer or purchaser be willing to work in good-faith and in open communication with the community and SHA in the redevelopment of the site with the intention to merge the project vision with the current community environment for the most compatible outcome;
- That it is important to the community and SHA that whatever redevelopment project Wilder finally selects for this site, that it be on a scale of mass and height that is compatible with the surrounding homes;
- That the selected project, whether residential or institutional, be such that any expected increase in current traffic and noise be as minimally disruptive to the surrounding residents as reasonably possible;

SHA wishes you the best in this sale. We stand ready to offer you any advice or guidance; to the extent you desire any, with respect to this process and your consideration of options.

Sincerely,



Tim Pramas, President
Summit Hill Association