



**District 10 Como Community Council**  
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January 24, 2013

Amy Brendmoen  
Ward 5 City Councilmember  
320-A City Hall  
15 Kellogg Blvd. W  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Councilmember Brendmoen and Planning and Economic Development:

On January 11, 2013, District 10 received a letter from the District 6 Council recommending that the entire "South Como" area as outlined in the Planning and Economic Development study be represented by District 10. As a result of this letter, and the prevailing sentiment voiced at Planning and Economic Development's public meeting on January 9th, 2013, the District 10 Como Community Council board passed a resolution on January 15, 2013, expressing our amenability to the change.

District 10 is committed to accepting this change in a careful, thorough manner. We must ensure that a newly constituted district council continues to effectively represent and advocate on behalf of all its members. According to our bylaws, as an independent, self-governing 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, District 10 is governed by a duly elected Board of Directors. The District 10 Board will facilitate at least three public meetings to ensure consultation with members of the District 10 community. Modifying our bylaws to expand District 10's boundaries requires that we fundamentally change the organization and its membership. These fundamental changes include: determining board size, board composition and committee structure, as well as considering new sub-district borders and representation. As duly elected directors, we have the responsibility to thoughtfully study these issues, consult with our citizen membership, evaluate our options, recommend, adopt and implement any agreed upon changes.

We are a volunteer organization dependent on the time and good work of citizens. Our volunteers are already busy with the routine work of the organization. For all of the reasons stated here, we believe that the process to purposefully implement these changes will require the remainder of 2013. Additionally, if the boundary changes were to occur prior to January 2014, it would have several more immediate and practical effects on the organization, such as the need to revise our city contract applications and recently Board approved 2013 budget.

While we wish to continue our positive working relationship with District 6 Planning Council, we cannot support District 6's request for the City of St. Paul to make necessary changes by March 2013. We request that changes, including changes to the early notification system and the overall city processes, be made effective for January 1, 2014. District 10 is not able to provide representation to affected residents until our governance structure has been revised to reflect changes to our boundaries.

District 10 does wish to support and, indeed, amplify the concerns expressed in the District 6 letter related to the City's process in this matter. Our concern is that the City ignored the self-governing character and independent governance of citizen-led district councils in favor of a process more suited to a city department or a citizen advisory board. Specifically, the statement that the City has the final say on District Council borders was not fully supported with the acknowledgement that the District 10 Como Community Council is a self-governing 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that defines its mission, purpose and boundaries, and must be in agreement with the City to implement any changes to our organization's structure. We fear that the way this issue was pushed forward has diminished the importance and the

independence of the district councils and, thus, has undermined the principle of citizen participation for which they were created.

As stated above, District 10 Como Community Council is amenable to making a boundary change to reflect District 6's considered recommendation. We have embarked on the process to make these changes, expect to have it completed by the end of 2013, and request that the City Council take the necessary actions on its end to affect these changes on January 1, 2014.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Knox', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jon Knox  
Board Chair, District 10 Como Community Council

Cc: Russ Stark, Ward 5 City Councilmember  
Donna Drummond, Planning and Economic Development  
Michelle Beaulieu, Planning and Economic Development  
District 6 Planning Council