

## **Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul)**

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**From:** Ericka Golden <erickagolden2001@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 24, 2021 11:33 AM  
**To:** \*CI-StPaul\_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary  
**Subject:** 275 Erie St.

I approve 275 Erie St. to become a duplex. My only concern is the physical external appearance of the property which is a total eyesore; the ugliest property on the block!!

Thank you,

Ericka Golden  
243 Erie St.

**Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul)**

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**From:** Jim Wilson <jwilson150@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 22, 2021 2:26 PM  
**To:** \*CI-StPaul\_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary  
**Cc:** Jim Wilson  
**Subject:** 275 Erie St.. Non Conforming duplex

To Whom it May Concern...RE: File # 21-236-115

I am James L Wilson and reside at 270 Oneida St. St Paul, MN 55102 I do not approve of the property at 275 Erie St being re zoned to a multi family residence. Please do not approve this rezoning.

James Wilson  
270 Oneida St  
St Paul, Mn 55102.

Sent from my iPad

## Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul)

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**From:** DEBORAH WATZL <dmewatzl@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 18, 2021 1:29 PM  
**To:** \*CI-StPaul\_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary  
**Subject:** 275 Erie / non conforming duplex

I would not like to see this building used as a duplex. The occupants that are living there now are enough. If you get more than one immediate family living there, as there has been there has been issues. I also feel that if you get more than one family there is not enough parking for them and there is also a lot more traffic going up and down our unpaved alley. We have enough rental property in this neighborhood, so please keep this building as a single unit building. I have lived on property for over 55 years and have seen many changes. Please keep this as a single unit building. Thank you,

Deb Watzl  
272 Oneida Street  
St. Paul, Mn 55102

Sent from my iPad

Jessica & Sarah Linden  
Owners and residents of:  
263 Erie Street  
Saint Paul, MN  
55102

February 24, 2021

St. Paul Planning Commission -

My wife and I are providing written public testimony in regard to *File # 21-236-115 275 Erie Nonconforming Duplex* which wishes to reestablish to nonconforming use as a duplex.

We wish to provide our input as residents of the city of Saint Paul, and more specifically Erie Street, that we do not wish for the reestablishment to occur. Having lived at 263 Erie Street since April of 2016 we have observed the **lack** of pride, ownership and investment in the neighborhood as exhibited by Mr. Eyob T Gebrekristos.

We have witnessed Mr. Gebrekristos have no regard for ensuring that his tenants are respectful neighbors. Even more importantly, Mr. Gebrekristos has minimal respect for the city of Saint Paul regulations when the city isn't watching, as it has been very apparent that 275 Erie Street has been rented as a multifamily home despite not being zoned as such. The three recycling bins that currently sit in the back parking area are just one sign. There are several other anecdotal instances over the years that made it very obvious, including the number of cars parked in the back and front, in addition to the number of people entering and leaving the premise. Additionally, when Mr. Gebrekristos put the house on the market in the spring of 2018 we did a walk through of the property out of curiosity and knowing the historical significance of the house as a former church. What stuck out to us the most was there being very clear signs of a kitchen having been recently removed in the lower and upper unit to give the appearance that this was a single family home, not a multifamily home rental.

We found these two videos to be very telling of the living conditions/layout of 275 Erie Street.

275 Upper Unit	275 Lower Unit
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXg25hbhOiA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXg25hbhOiA</a>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCEasG0pqKk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCEasG0pqKk</a>

While we have not personally submitted any official complaints, a search for this property in public records shows there have been 21 service requests submitted to the City, by phone or email since April 19, 2016, with the last being filed on July 21, 2020. The types of complaints include Permit, Garbage Rubbish, Certificate of Occupancy, Tall Grass, Snow Walk, Vehicle/ Abandoned and Parking. The neighbors have spoken very clearly over the course of four years that this residence is a nuisance when being operated by Mr. Gebrekristos as a multifamily home. We ask that the city of Saint Paul Planning Commission listen.

With all of this being said, the way Mr. Gebrekristos has been operating his rental property since the spring of 2020 has been respectful. Improvements have included installing a rear privacy fence and only allowing 1-3 individuals to live in the home. As a result, any backyard

debris is hidden behind the privacy fence, snow is removed, vehicles are not abandoned, parking is not an issue and most importantly, the inappropriate behavior that was occurring at the home has disappeared. The description of this behavior is accurately explained in the public testimony email submitted by Craig Favorito on Feb. 14, 2021. It echos the observations and experiences that we have had while living on the same street and sharing an alleyway with the residents of 275 Erie St.

We do disagree with the Planning Commissions Zoning Committee Staff Report statement that the “The proposed use will not be detrimental to the existing character of development in the immediate neighborhood or endanger the public health, safety, or general welfare.” Based on historical experience with Mr. Gebrekristos operating this rental as anything more than a single-family residence, we believe that there would be an impact on the neighborhood.

While reviewing Mr. Gebrekristos’ Affidavit from Nov. 21, 2019 (screenshot below), we were shocked and disappointed to read his experience of racism from our neighbors. While we cannot speak to someones personal experience, we can provide personal stories of our own as a brown person and members of the LBGQTQ community. As mentioned earlier we moved into the neighborhood in April of 2016. Since then we have been warmly welcomed by our neighbors and feel safe in our home and on our street. We have welcomed the children of the 275 Erie St. tenants into our yard to play or converse, and witnessed on multiple occasions neighborhood children playing with the kids. We have not personally seen any signs of racism that Mr. Gebrekristos speaks of and we welcome him to knock on our front door when COVID allows it to be safe.

6. I have leased the property to a family. Several of the neighbors have organized together and have repeatedly reported complaints regarding this family. This City has investigated their claims, but not one of these reports proved to be credible. These neighbors are White. My tenants are African-American. Because of the hostility visited upon me and my tenants by these White residents, I can only surmise that the motivation for their resistance and obstruction of my plans to improve the home is race-based.

7. I do not believe that it is safe for me to go from house to house to get support. The hostility that has been shown me is because of my race, coloring and/or national origin. If I have to go through the signature collection process, I will be subjected to more hate, hostility and discrimination. The process of collecting residential assent just is not safe for someone like me.

We welcome Mr. Gebrekristos and his tenants into the neighborhood if they are respectful as such. However, history has shown that if Mr. Gebrekristos legally (or illegally) operates 275 Erie Street as anything more than a single family residence he is unable to be a respectful

homeowner/neighbor. While he is able to drive home to his personal residence at 3801 Laurel Court, Eagan 55122 and leave the mess behind, the residents of Erie Street are not.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sarah Linden  
Jessica Linden

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sarah Linden".A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jessica Linden".

**From:** [Emily Northey](#)  
**To:** [\\*CI-StPaul\\_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)  
**Cc:** [Jerve, Anton \(CI-StPaul\)](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment on 275 Erie Street from Resident  
**Date:** Friday, February 19, 2021 1:44:04 PM

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**Think Before You Click:** This email originated **outside** our organization.

Dear Zoning Committee,

I'm emailing this public comment from Bill Sommerhauser about the application for 275 Erie Street for "reestablishment of nonconforming use as a duplex." Bill was unable to email the public comments directly himself ahead of the meeting because he does not have a computer, so I'm submitting them on his behalf after he reached out to my office. I'm mailing Bill a copy of this email for his records.

Bill Sommerhauser lives at 287 Erie Street in Saint Paul, MN.

I, Emily Northey, transcribed what Bill told to me on February 19, 2021. Bill's comments are as follows:

"I oppose them reestablishing this as a nonconforming use as a duplex. I think it should just be a single family residence."

Thank you,  
Emily

Emily Northey  
Executive Director and Community Organizer  
West 7th / Fort Road Federation, 882 West 7th Street, Suite 6, Saint Paul, MN [Detailed Directions](#)  
[emily@fortroadfederation.org](mailto:emily@fortroadfederation.org)  
office: 651.298.5599 / [Sign-up for Email Updates](#) / [Facebook](#) / [Instagram](#) / [Twitter](#)

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