

From: [Eric L](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#); [Langer, Samantha \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Cc: [Dubruiel, Paul \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [Sawyer, Paul \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [Jennifer Werner](#); [Torstenson, Allan \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [Johnson, Tony \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: ZF# 21-320-126, 79 N. Western Nonconforming Restaurant Expansion
Date: Wednesday, December 8, 2021 3:41:00 AM
Attachments: [79-N-Western_ZoningFile_ZF-21-320-126_Nonconforming-Restaurant-Expansion_2021-12-09.pdf](#)

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

TO: Saint Paul PED, Zoning Committee
RE: **ZF# 21-320-126**, 79 N. Western Nonconforming Restaurant Expansion
Public Hearing Testimony; Thursday, December 9, 2021, 3:30 PM

Please include this email and the attached .pdf file in the record for consideration by members of the Zoning Committee.

Mr. Rupp's Commodore bar and restaurant have been a popular and significant part of Saint Paul's history. I hope to support approval of this zoning request, however I will not do so if the City of Saint Paul does not ensure that an existing driveway-related hazard is eliminated. For 30 years I have lived close by and, four to six times each day and night, I walk my dog along Western Avenue next to or across the street from the Commodore parking lot. I have witnessed many near-miss driveway encounters. Almost four years ago, before COVID-19 and before the Commodore's bar and restaurant spaces were involuntarily closed to customers, I submitted the following testimony for the City Council Public Hearing **February 21, 2018, Agenda #47 ABZA 18-2 -- WEST ADDITION TO COMMODORE RESTAURANT:**

- ***For future consideration:*** *Traffic and vehicles in and close to the Commodore parking lot have created an existing, **incessant and hazardous** problem. As described by John O'Brien, **vehicles of non-residents frequently turn from Western Avenue into the Commodore's "garage access only" south driveway.** Upon finding themselves trapped, drivers are forced to back into oncoming traffic on Western. While backing across the city sidewalk (at high risk to occasional pedestrians), the drivers' line of sight is almost always blocked by cars parked on Western. I have watched it happen dozens of times. The near misses are especially exciting after dark...when Mr. Rupp's Commodore Bar and Restaurant attracts plenty of happy customers.*

The Commodore bar and restaurant spaces have been closed for public gatherings since early winter of 2020.

- St. Paul Pioneer Press, 02/18/2020



- In 2020 when the Commodore's non-resident customers disappeared, the "incessant and hazardous" traffic problem disappeared. The past 20+ months at the "garage access only" driveway have been relatively incident-free. Approval of expanded restaurant spaces will encourage a greater number of patrons. If the driveway arrangement remains as-is the number of near-miss backing-into-Western-Avenue-traffic incidents will, at best, increase. At worst ... an accident will kill or severely injure someone.

SUGGESTION & REQUEST: Before the Nonconforming Restaurant Expansion spaces are allowed to open for public use, **please ensure that the "garage access only" driveway has been reconfigured** so that confused drivers can safely escape their "Oops, wrong driveway!" predicament by driving forward and directly into the large parking lot. Years ago the existing dead-end driveway proved itself to be dangerous when combined with non-resident bar/restaurant patrons who are not (and cannot be expected to be) familiar with the facility's parking lot layout.

- The attached .pdf file contains daytime Western Avenue street view photos. Views include the Commodore's "garage access only" driveway (marked with a red/yellow arrow) that lies between the building and the large outdoor parking lot.
- Nighttime drivers, especially when approaching from the South and Summit Avenue, are most likely to turn into the wrong driveway, thus initiating a death-defying low-visibility backup maneuver across the city sidewalk and into Western Avenue's oncoming traffic.
- **Please "fix" - not aggravate - this (historic?) neighborhood hazard.**





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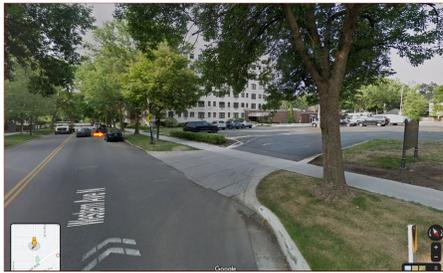
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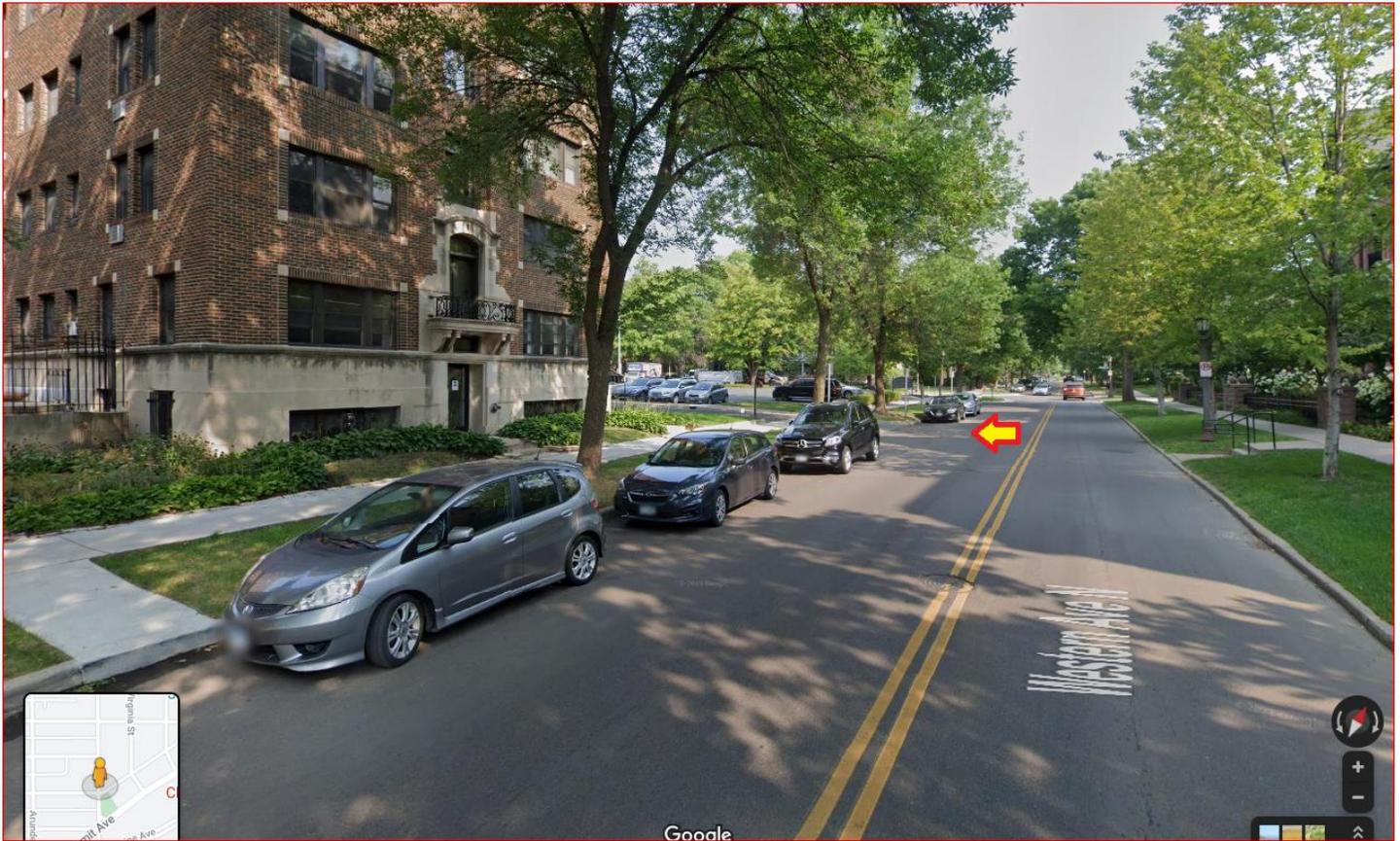
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Sincerely,

Eric Lein

361 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55102

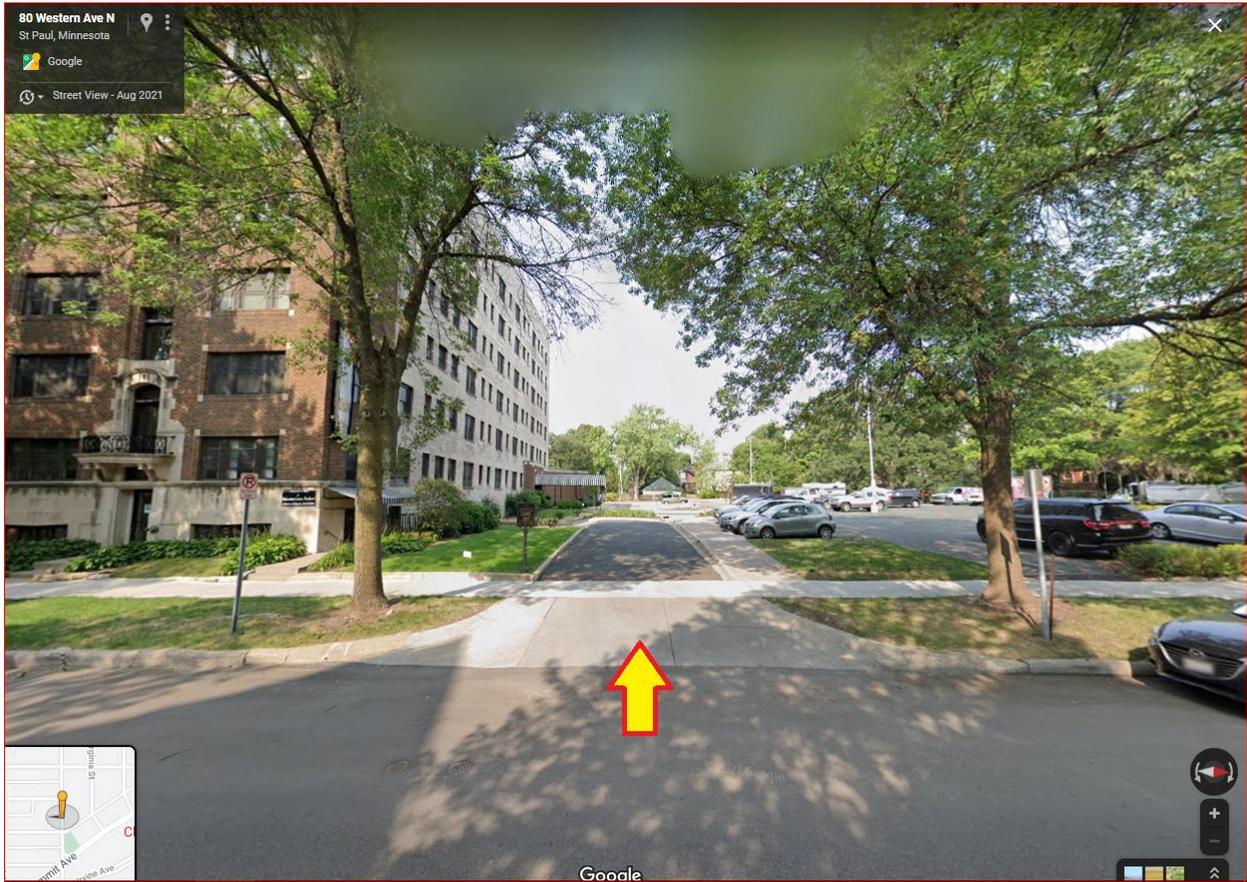
Neighbor - Less than 350-feet from the Commodore's Nonconforming Restaurant Expansion



Views when approaching from the South

“Garage access only” private driveway is first & obvious. Main parking lot driveway is obscured.





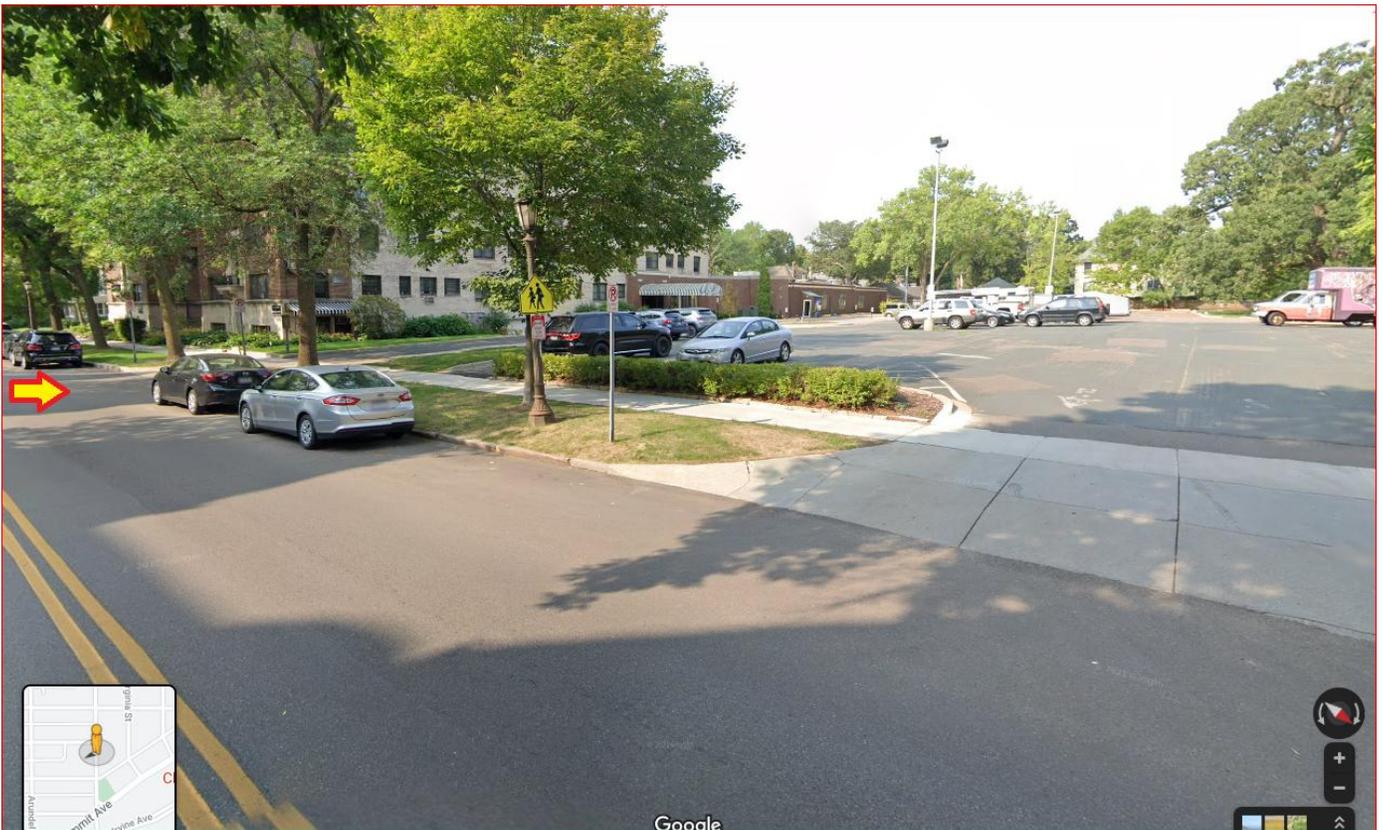
Private driveway – “garage access only”

The unlit sign (at left) is not easily noticed by drivers until after turning into this driveway.





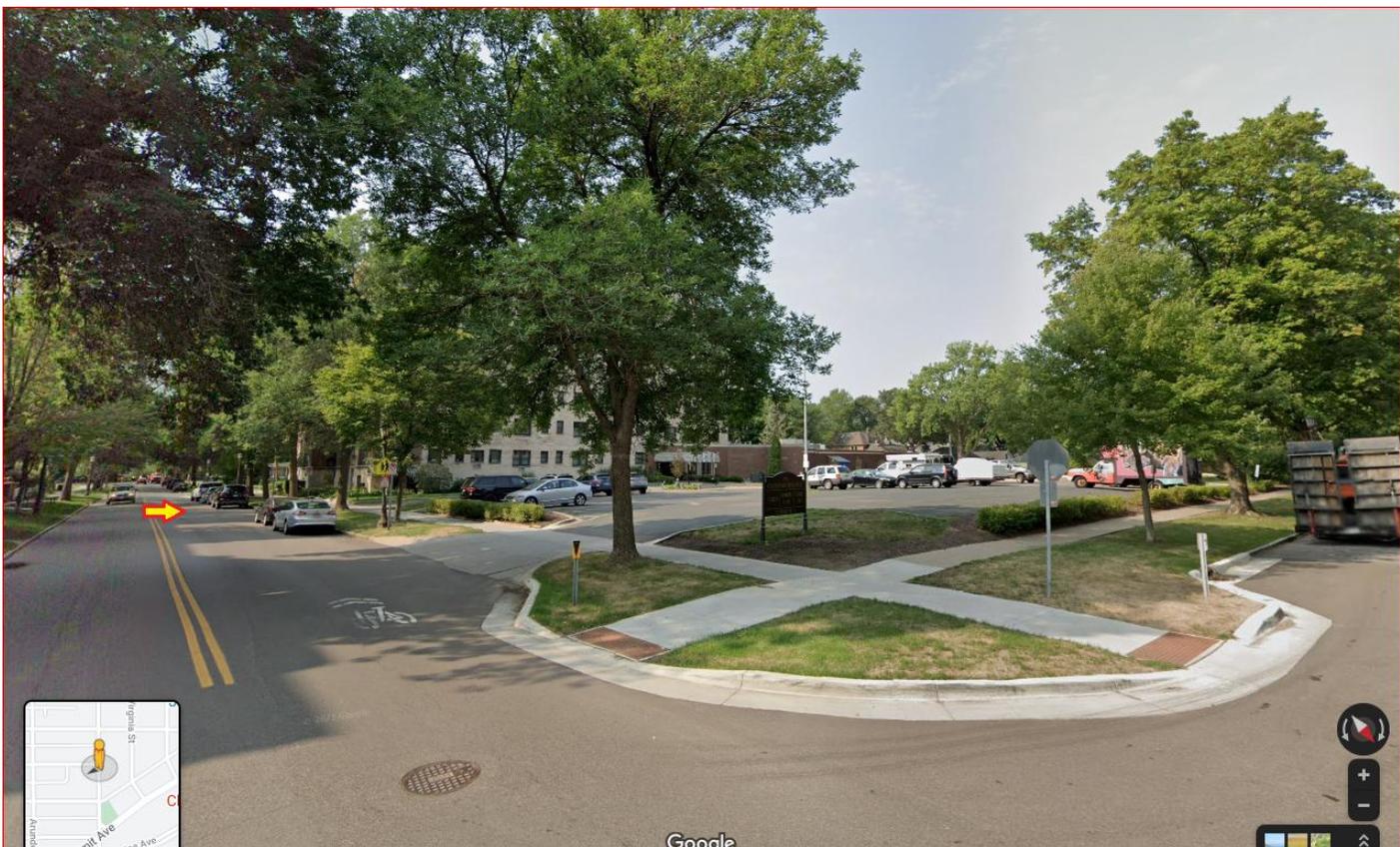
Views when approaching from the North





Views when approaching from the North

Main parking lot driveway is easily visible.



From: [Elaine Elnes](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: Public Testimony: for ZF# 21-320-126, 79 N Western, St. Paul, MN 55102, Nonconforming Restaurant Expansion (into an adjacent building)
Date: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 5:19:18 PM

Public Testimony: for ZF# 21-320-126, 79 N Western, St. Paul, MN 55102, Nonconforming Restaurant Expansion (into an adjacent building)

I have lived at The Commodore Condominiums for the past forty years: Twenty plus years on the third floor above the bar area and nineteen and a half years on the second floor above the bar area. During the past thirty years when the present owner of Unit A has owned this unit I have been frequently bothered by loud music that has disturbed my ability to enjoy my home: can't sleep, can't hear the television over the noise, not cooperating with the neighbors requests to turn down the music, disturbances in the front entrance of the building from smoking, loud conversations and even fights.

I have called during these events asking that the decibels of the music be turned lowered, I have gone down to Unit A requesting that the music be turned down, I have called the police reporting a disturbance, etc. Nothing works, requests are heard with a shrug of the shoulders.

Our building condominium rules state that noise should not be heard outside of our individual unit and that all noise must not exist after 10:00 p.m. This noncompliance of our rules must stop.

It is hard and almost impossible for me to enjoy the peace and quiet of my home when there is an event going on in UNIT A which involves music. My fear is with this expansion it will only get worse. There needs to be an agreed upon maximum decibel level of music between the Commodore Condominium Association and Unit A. Enough of events in Unit A disturbing the enjoyment of our homes. NO one ever seems to be in charge in Unit A.

Sincerely,

Elaine Marie Elnes
Units 200 and 202 Commodore Condominiums
79 Western Avenue N
St. Paul, MN 55102
651-271-9361
elelnes@me.com