

From: [David Swanson](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul](#); [Contact-Council](#); [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Alley vacation: Opposed
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I am writing to request that the City Council deny the proposed alley vacation, or alternatively, defer the vote until a comprehensive, independent tree and wildlife study is completed and the conditions outlined below are fully integrated as binding requirements for project approval.

This swath of forest, located right in the heart of St. Paul, is incredibly unique and has remained completely undisturbed for over 100 years. It serves as an irreplaceable natural habitat for diverse wildlife, including foxes, deer, coyotes, chipmunks, turkeys, eagles, and a seemingly limitless variety of migratory birds.

To protect this vital environmental resource, we request that the following recommendations from the Highland District Council (HDC) be attached as strict mandates (attached to approval) should any development move forward:

- **Limit Total Density to 10 Dwelling Units:** Scott Ramsay currently owns 777, 779, and 1520 Edgcumbe. A strict cap is necessary to prevent potential lot consolidation or piecemeal development across the alley and onto his personal property, which would bypass density intent. This is clearly a risk of the proposed vacation.
- **Mandate an Independent Tree Study:** Require a comprehensive tree survey to be conducted by a neutral third party and shared transparently with neighbors, the HDC, and the Watershed District before any permits are issued.
- **Protect Old-Growth Canopy:** Commit to the absolute protection of the 100+ year-old oak trees located on or immediately adjacent to the area slated for vacation.
- **Enforce Minimal Tree Removal:** Allow the removal of only those trees deemed strictly necessary for the physical development, as verified by a neutral third-party arborist.
- **Document Wildlife Mitigation:** Require the developers to make a sincere, documented, and enforceable effort to minimize disruption to the local wildlife and migratory bird populations.
- **Provide Continuous Site Plan Updates:** Require the developers to submit regular updates to the HDC, impacted neighbors, and the Watershed District. These updates must explicitly include the findings of the tree study, clearly marked property and alley lines, plotted setbacks, required greenspace calculations, and all environmental or watershed concerns and interventions.

I am a neighbor and it should be noted that none of the adjacent property owners supported the vacation. We must remember that the best use of land may not be the one that generates buildings, but one that maintains the quality of life in our city. And denying the vacation will not stop the project, but it might reduce profit for the developer. Denial is a reasonable compromise.

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