

## Dairy Queen site redevelopment

### Notes from the March 19, 2018 Committee on Land Use and Economic Development

Judd Fenlon, of Grand Real Estate Advisors, is partnering with Ned Wesenberg to build a single-story commercial building at the site of the former Dairy Queen at Snelling and Hague (one block south of Selby).

They intend to have two casual restaurant tenants. They have had substantial conversations with Dunkin' Donuts and Red's Savoy Pizza as possible tenants, but have not yet finalized any agreement. Here are a few highlights on the project:

- Through the exterior design, they are attempting to create "classic St. Paul street frontage," and plan to use a combination of brick, wood, and metal canopies.
- They would like to maintain a pedestrian presence on Snelling, so there will be a fair amount of storefront on north and east side of the building.
- There will be 14 parking stalls behind the building (the city code requires 10). The excess parking gives them capacity in case they want to pursue other (sit-down) food options.
- The site was rezoned to T2 during Snelling zoning changes. No variances would be required in the design shown, and they will not be incorporating a drive-through.
- The city is conducting site plan review during the first week of April. They hope to start construction mid-June to mid-July.

They did say that they hoped to build mixed-use retail with housing above it on this site. However, the site is 10,000 square feet, and they couldn't fit in the parking required or desired to support more density on the site, and the cost of building a second floor made the project not viable. An underground parking configurations provided little additional parking. They did pursue the option of purchasing the house to the west, to expand the site's square footage, but the owner does not want to sell.

Neighbors had some questions that the team answered:

- **Will the establishments have tables, or be mostly for to-go items?** The size of each proposed establishment is 3,500 square feet for Red Savoy and 1,500 square feet for Dunkin' Donuts. It will largely be take-out business, but there may be a few tables at each establishment.
- **Do you plan to serve alcohol at the site?** No.
- **Do the tenants have to be big national corporations?** New construction is expensive, and that makes it hard for smaller local businesses to afford the rent.
- **Would you consider a single restaurant space, which could provide a sit-down, neighborhood walkable destination?** It seems that there might not be the market for that (although that answer was questioned).
- **Is Dunkin Donuts comfortable with the parking provided?** Yes. The customers are "in and out, quick service," and the two businesses complement each other (with donuts and coffee popular in the morning, and pizza popular in the evening).
- **Have you had any discussion about solar on the roof?** They have indeed spoken with a company about putting together a proposal.
- **How will you address the pedestrian safety concerns in that area?** The curb cut entrances for vehicles have been "dropped back" away from the corner; the Snelling entrance point is pushed as far south as possible.
- **How will we deal with increased cut through traffic on Hague?** (There's a feeling that drivers won't wait to go north on Snelling, they'll go west on Hague.) The Union Park board has passed a resolution to explore the installation of a median down Snelling; it would provide pedestrian refuges and prohibit left hand turns at Hague and Ashland, enhance pedestrian safety, and limiting some turning onto Hague. Union Park will continue to work with developers and the city on ideas in this area.