

**Written Comments Received – Proposed Amendment for The Emi**  
**As of 9/28/20 2:25pm**

**The Emi – Virtual Open House Comments**

1. Laury Baars - I am still very much against this monstrosity going into our neighborhood, but guess it has become useless to beat a dead horse. Perhaps if the building had some architectural value, it would be more palatable. It reminds me of a big box warehouse. And too close to the street on the north side. I am also very concerned about who will be willing to rent these tiny studio apartments and the extra traffic it will bring going north on Stevens. Sorry for the negativity, but you already have been told by almost every neighbor in the area that we feel this was pushed down our throats. It just doesn't fit.
2. Pat Taragos - Still sounds like too much traffic, parking on ours streets, etc. I was so hoping two homes would be built there.
3. Jonna Klisch - While the news of the reduced retail space is welcome, I'm concerned about the increased number of units (31 to 42) with the same number of parking stalls (33) planned. How can you say the parking ratios are better with more units and the same number of stalls?? In addition, I see that the exit/entrance to the parking lot on Stevens is restricted to avoid southbound traffic onto Stevens, but no such restriction on 1st. We get enough traffic now with drivers cutting through to avoid backups at the 66th/Nicollet roundabout and open access on 1st will lead to even MORE traffic coming down 1st Ave.
4. Al Klisch - There is not enough parking for the complex. I don't want the over flow parking on the streets. Further reducing the flow of traffic. And when comes to street cleaning and snow removal the city will not tag parking parking offenders. Further creating traffic flow issues on 1st ave. and Stevens. When the snow is not cleaned up from cars not being moved.
5. Lauren Plantan - Hello - Thank-you for sending out postcards informing neighbors about updates made to the EMI. 1. My fellow neighbors and I (all sharing the block with the EMI) are environmentally conscious. I personally have a pollinator-friendly yard and have committed to organic lawn care. As a token of good faith, will you commit to caring for your green space (turf) organically? Will you consider landscaping with plants that are native (i.e. more drought tolerant) and pollinator-friendly? Not only will this help get neighbors on board with your project, but it will be a great marketing tool for your building. Your green space will be safe for adults, children, pets, and our local water supply. If using native

plants, as well, you will need to use less water once established - saving you money! If you need names of some great local companies that provide organic lawn care services and help with restorative landscaping, please let me know. 2. I also would like assurance that you will commit to using a non-salt alternative for winter sidewalk de-icing such as "SafePaw". Again - another great way to market your building as environmentally conscious. And it won't negatively affect your green space come spring - saving you money for the cost of turf replacement. 3. Do you have updated drawings with removal of 5,000sf of commercial space on the first floor of the EMI? I look forward to hearing from you, XXX

6. Kathleen Balaban - EMI was suppose to 'work with' the neighbors for this new design and to my knowledge, not one resident was contacted for input until now and we are only 7 days away from the Planning Commission meeting. I don't believe that there are enough parking spots for the added apts. EMI is assuming that the reduced retail space would be sufficient. Retail parking is short term and residential parking is long term. This floor plan does not provide enough long term parking. In addition, apts on ground level facing 66th St are subject to high levels of road dust and air pollution. In addition, this new exterior design is not shown in its entirety, only an elongated view that is incomplete. This new design is quite 'unattractive' and is not a visible asset to the neighborhood.
7. Amelia Helm - I'm a local resident who, truthfully, is open to more density but is not super keen on how modern and mismatched the style of this development is to our local community. NOTHING looks like this and it's not a classic look that will age well. However, I know that's the current vibe. I do however have some concerns with the changes to the plan. When this was approved to be changed from residential only to mixed use, it was done so with the promise that there would be local businesses to benefit the existing residents nearby. This is being greatly reduced. So now we will have a bit of an eye sore, and very few benefits to those of us within a walking distance. Richfield needs more small local businesses, especially with front facing property on main roads for visibility. I'd be happy to share our street parking with visitors to a coffee shop or yoga studio. It's short sighted to make these changes - COVID will not be here in 3 years, this building will be. Keep the commercial spaces available for local businesses that need them. That's a bigger need than a few more windowless studio apartments.
8. Tracy Satterlund - How does increasing the number of apartments improve the parking ratio when you have the same number of underground parking spaces?

My original concern about increased traffic on Stevens Ave due to the addition of

two driveways, one from the surface parking lot and the other from the garage, onto Stevens.

9. Tom Lutz - So let me get this straight, you're increasing the number of housing units from 31 to 42 and you're not increasing the number of underground parking spots, but suggest "better parking ratios", ARE YOU FUCKING MAD! That's provided you have tenants that will never have any visitors, otherwise they'll have to park up and down 1st and Stevens Avenue. Just sell the lots and quit trying to shove this unpopular boondoggle down the citizens throats.

#### **Comments submitted to staff:**

1. I see the developer for the proposed project on 66th and Stevens Avenue has finally realized he'll never fill the commercial units in his preliminary submission and now wants to increase the residential units from 32 to 41 without increasing the number of underground parking stalls, ARE YOU MAD! Where do you think these people are going to park, and what about any visitors they might have, where are they going to park???

This guy is nuts, he obviously doesn't care one bit about the residents on 1st and Stevens. I don't see any of the newly constructed residential properties in Edina with people being required to park outside or in the streets, why can't we follow the same criteria and standards as Edina?

The developer also has contacted very few people in the area about his proposal, giving the impression he's trying to push this through quietly, luckily we have great neighbors who notified us.

With COVID-19 going on, I don't think you'll get the heated "in your face" forum you'd have with a typical public hearing, so I just wanted my voice to be heard by emailing you. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely, Tom Lutz 6719 Stevens Avenue

2. Hi Melissa, I have been communicating with Sean regarding the proposed development of the property at 66th Street and 1st Avenue by EMI and Mr Lynch. He said that you could read my thoughts into the record at the PC meeting which I will not be able to participate in due to my wife's terminal illness. Since the beginning of Mr Lynch's ownership of the property, he has made no progress in building what he originally proposed to the City two or more years ago. Specifically, he has not demolished the existing structures on the property creating what my neighbors and myself consider urban blight. Any other

property owner would have been cited long ago for this situation. Our neighborhood's property values have been severely impacted by this blight. Most of the people in my neighborhood are elderly and may soon have to think about selling their homes. Having this abomination on the corner of the neighborhood is bound to lower property values for the current residents. Instead of citing EMI for this, the City continues to coddle EMI by non-enforcement. Mr Lynch has tried to sell the property without success despite lowering the asking price. It is obvious that he made a bad investment! Now all of the neighborhood is suffering a loss of property values while the City does little or nothing to move the situation along. Now EMI wants yet another change of plans/extension from the City. This, if approved, will only lead to more foot-dragging on EMI's part. Note that the Virtual Tour mailing sent to the neighborhood contains the qualifier "economic conditions permitting". I see this as just another way of keeping the Urban Blight in place. Sean told me that the reason the buildings are still there involves some "before and after" comparison. I find this very difficult to believe. When I asked Mr Lynch on the day he and his crew removed the trees from the property about demolition of the run-down, condemned structures, he told me that he couldn't afford the City's fee to have the water and sewer disconnected. Yet, he proposes to build a multi-million dollar apartment building? I don't think so. Incidentally, he never mentioned anything about "before and after" comparisons. This leads me to believe that the "before and after" is an excuse to continue to coddle EMI and expose my neighborhood to continued loss of property values. As the tone of this letter indicates, I am totally opposed to any extension of the existing permit or the change in the plan previously approved. It's time for the City to step up and put an end to this charade once and for all. Thanks for listening, Stephen Vopatek

3. I am not in favor of the amended change to remove retail space and replace with an additional 11 apartments (31 to 42) in the EMI development. The initial design included 31 units with 33 parking stalls; I (and other neighbors as well) were concerned that that amount of parking was not sufficient, and now this new amendment adds 11 new units with no additional parking capacity planned. With no parking capacity increase, parking for the project would be forced on to either 1<sup>st</sup> or Stevens Avenues. There is currently a single duplex ½ block from me (67<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>) that has 6 vehicles that park on the street nightly and I'm concerned that the proposed additional 11 units are going to result in similar parking challenges; bumper to bumper overnight parking with poor visibility around parked vehicles, increased litter in the street, lack of curb to curb snow plowing and reduced curb to curb street sweeping due to unmoved vehicles.

I'm also concerned about increased traffic through the neighborhood and on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue especially. During rush hour, the roundabout at Nicollet & 66<sup>th</sup> backs up past 67<sup>th</sup>, so numerous drivers cut through onto 1<sup>st</sup> Ave at 67<sup>th</sup> or 68<sup>th</sup> to avoid the delay. While traffic is lighter right now due to COVID, this is an issue that started after the roundabout was completed and still occurs on a daily basis.

In preparation for this planning commission meeting, I've been speaking with quite a few neighbors around me. Sadly, most felt that the initial EMI development plan's acceptance was done with little consideration for neighborhood feedback and concerns; as such they seemed to be resigned to any new feedback on this amendment falling on deaf ears at Richfield City Hall. Transparency in city planning is perceived as being ignored in favor of pushing through projects that meet City agendas most neighbors are not privy to; a common question I heard was around what the exact plans are for future development at the HUB and speculation on how the EMI plays into those plans. I can't imagine that luxury apartments that overlook Dairy Queen, Subway and a nail salon are part of the long term usage plan for the HUB? Thank you for your consideration of my input,

JONNA KLISCH  
6641 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. S., Richfield, MN, 55423

4. Historically, some of the consistent concerns surrounding this project have been the following:
  - 1) The building is far too large for such a small lot, physically dwarfs all surrounding structures, and doesn't fit architecturally with the neighborhood
  - 2) The traffic that will be generated from such a large structure on a such a small lot will have an outsized undue adverse impact on the neighborhood, especially with the proposal to cram more units into this small footprint, over and above those added to the displaced commercial spaces. In addition, it is unknown who the commercial tenant might be. Per a 2018 traffic study on the site completed by Spack Consulting, traffic will vary greatly depending upon the specific type of commercial tenants in the building.

- 3) Parking may be insufficient to prevent spillover onto the adjacent streets. The additional apartments proposed, and the unknowns about commercial tenant type add to these concerns.
- 4) Safety for children and pedestrians, with two driveways exiting onto 66<sup>th</sup> and Stevens, and one driveway exits onto 66<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>. There is no visible curb cut on the plans to prohibit turns onto 66<sup>th</sup> and Stevens and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenues.
- 5) Concerns about future adherence to the proposed resolution and all its elements. The fact that this project was approved in 2018, and has had one issue after another does not inspire confidence that the plans will be carried through as written.

I plan to live in my home for many years to come, and want to see a neighborhood that is thriving and healthy.

Julie Lapensky

6621 Stevens Ave.