

SIDEWALK DIVISION
ROOM 201 CITY HALL
MINNEAPOLIS MN 55415

APPLICATION FOR
SPECIAL BOULEVARD PERMIT

THIS APPLICATION MUST BE APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE AND GRANTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL BEFORE YOU SECURE YOUR SPECIAL PERMIT FROM THE CITY ENGINEER.

DATE July 5, 2009

TO THE CITY COUNCIL:

Permission is requested to:

We, my partner and I, would like to put in a concrete sidewalk along the curb in the boulevard in front of our two properties to make it safer for residents/tenants who park along this section of Lyndale Avenue South.

Location: 3644 Lyndale Avenue South and 3648 Lyndale Avenue South

Zoning _____ Use of Property residential/rental

Size: 3-foot by approximately 70-foot, since it spans both properties Plan included: Yes with photos

Additional information (Reason wanted) (please see attached sheets with reasons listed)

THIS PERMIT IS APPLIED FOR UPON THE EXPRESS CONDITION THAT ALL WORK DONE UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF SAME SHALL CONFORM IN ALL RESPECTS TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS.

Signed Jim Schoepke Tom Backen

Fee Paid N/A

Jim Schoepke and Tom Backen

Mailing address 3648 Lyndale Avenue South #2

Permit No. _____

Minneapolis, MN 55409

Telephone No. 612-875-6226

City Engineer Recommends

Approve _____ Not Approve

DANIEL P. BAUER
SUPERVISOR
Pvt. Sidewalk Insp.
07/10/09

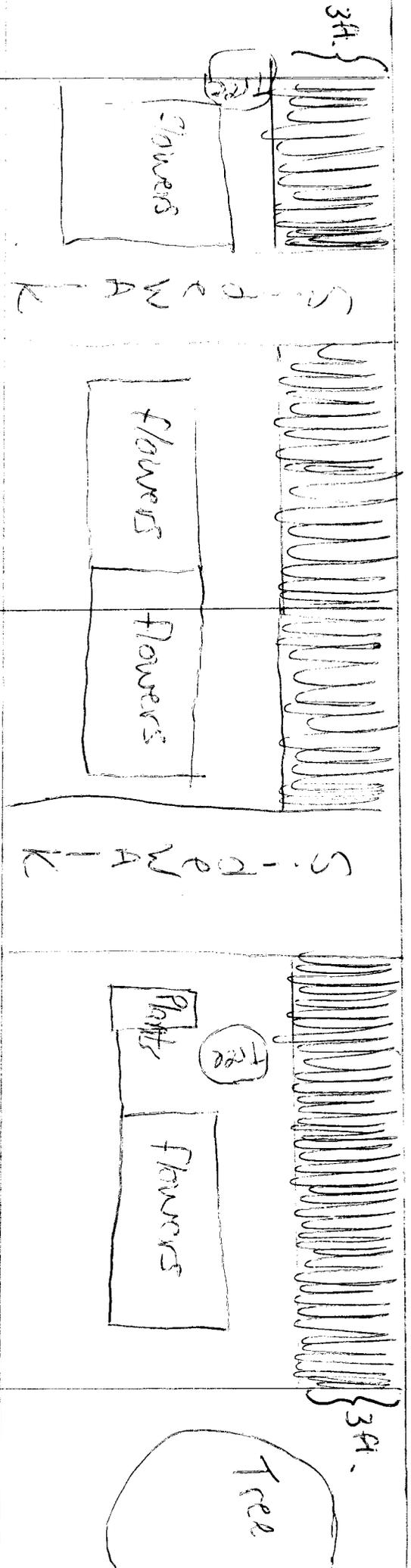
Approved: Council Member Ward _____

Transportation and Public Works committee Recommends Approve _____ Not Approve _____

City Council Approved _____ Not Approved _____

Date

Lyndale Ave S.



34

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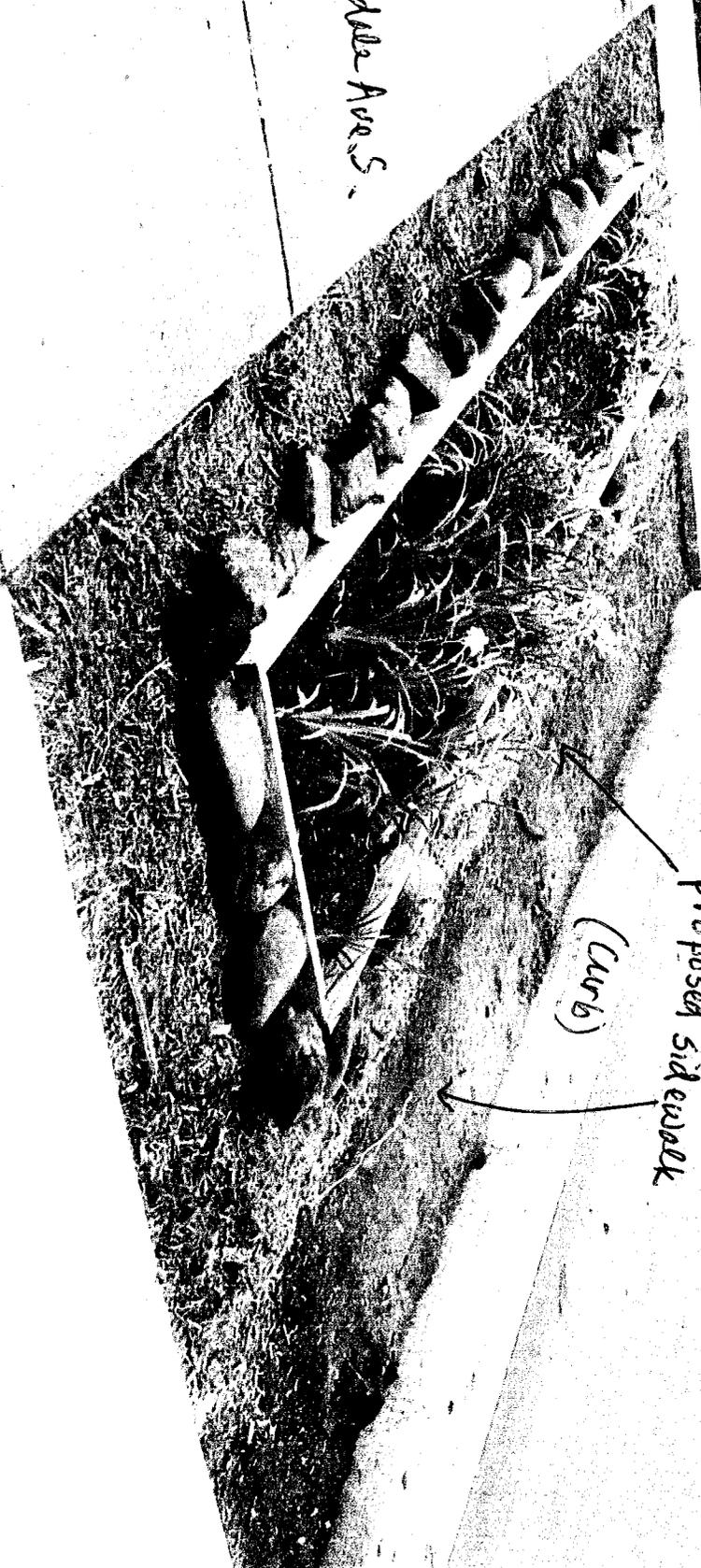
344

348

Side walk

Key:  = proposed sidewalk
(see pictures also)

3644 Lyndale Ave S.



Proposed sidewalk
(Curb)



Proposed sidewalk

curb

3648 Lyndale Ave S.



Attachment to Application for Special Boulevard Permit

Additional information (Reasons wanted)

Particularly in winter, when snowbanks line the street, this proposed strip of concrete would allow people to get out of their cars on the curbside and not open their doors into a snowbank. We would snow-blow this sidewalk and keep it shoveled, clear, and safe. In addition, having this sidewalk would allow people to park closer to the curb because, even with good snowplowing, inevitably the snowbanks left behind take up space and, as anyone who lives along Lyndale (or any Minneapolis street) knows, during winter, the parking and driving lanes get considerably narrower depending upon the amount of snow. In truth, this little strip of concrete would make it safer year-round to exit cars on the curbside because people could then step out onto concrete and not trample the flowers we plant in the boulevard.

Reasons we think you should allow us to do this project:

1. We are tax-paying, law-abiding citizens who have lived at 3648 Lyndale Ave. S. since 1992. We purchased the house at 3644 Lyndale Ave. S. in 2004 and turned it from a drug house to a beautiful rental property. In other words, we believe in taking care of our properties and beautifying the city of Minneapolis.
2. During the past two decades, we have consistently won Minneapolis Blooms Awards (on behalf of the Minneapolis Blooms Program of the Committee on Urban Environment) recognizing, honoring, and thanking gardeners who take pride in their boulevard gardens. In fact, our gardens were visited by the then-mayor of Minneapolis, Sharon Sayles-Belton, and have been twice featured in the Lyndale Farmstead neighborhood garden tour.
3. We could, like many homeowners, just let the boulevard go and have yellow, dried grass, dandelions, or weeds and the city would be fine with that?
4. We've been told that we *are* allowed to put pavers in along the curb without a permit and that would be acceptable. However, that raises a few questions:
 - A. Why are pavers allowed, but not a concrete sidewalk?
 - B. Pavers are not as safe as a concrete sidewalk because they shift with the ground and the seasons, and end up becoming jagged which could, potentially, trip people walking on them.
 - C. We've investigated the comparative costs of pavers versus pouring concrete, and we found concrete to be less expensive.
 - D. The fact that concrete is less expensive and *safer* for all is why we'd like to pour a concrete sidewalk.
5. If it's a matter of being concerned about keeping green spaces in the city, the sidewalk we're proposing is not the whole width of the boulevard; in fact, it would be only about one-third of the width with the remaining two-thirds being landscaped with flowers, plants, and wood chips (see attached pictures).

6. In addition, the proposed concrete sidewalk would be slightly slanted so rainwater will run into the boulevard (to water the plants and trees) and not into the street (thus encouraging less runoff into the city storm sewers—a concept we were educated about and encouraged to do when we attended city-sponsored “rain garden” workshops a couple of years ago).

7. Some people along the Lyndale Avenue reconstruction project were allowed to put in landscape rock along the curb. Even though the city apparently allows homeowners to do this, it's not an attractive alternative because the rock is unstable to walk on and the rock pieces are bound to get into the street along the curb.

8. Some businesses along the Lyndale Avenue reconstruction project (just a block away and across the street from our home) have concrete in their boulevards, so why aren't homeowners allowed to do so? In fact, these business boulevards are solid concrete for the *entire* boulevard, not two-thirds green as is our proposal. The businesses are the BP gas station at 36th and Lyndale Ave. S. and the building just north of this on Lyndale, next to the BP station (the former “Bayberry” flower shop, now empty).

9. Furthermore, if one drives south on Lyndale Avenue from our property, there are several more businesses with boulevards that are *entirely* concrete, so the concept of allowing or not allowing concrete in the boulevard seems to have been inconsistently applied already. Again, are businesses given more leeway or privileges than homeowners?

10. If the concern is a business vs. private property issue, both our properties are rental units (the house at 3644 and the lower duplex at 3648). These are our businesses for which we have to purchase a rental license each year from the city. So, if businesses are allowed to have concrete in their boulevards, then our rental units as businesses should be treated the same.

11. It strikes us as odd that the city “owns” the boulevard, but expects its citizens to take care of it (watering, mowing, planting, snow removal, etc.) and yet when citizens have a good idea to make the boulevard more beautiful and, indeed, safer for all, we have to beg, plead, and “fight” the powers-that-be to do so. Instead, why not reward hard-working, tax-paying, award-winning gardeners with a simple request that makes logical sense.

12. It would cost the city nothing at all! We would, of course, pay for this sidewalk ourselves. The sidewalk would be installed by a state-licensed contractor (who also advised that a smooth sidewalk would be much preferred over pavers in this instance). Our contractor's name is John Beutz, owner of Edina Landscaping and Concrete.

13. What would be the reason for the city to *not* allow us to do this? No one we've asked could provide an answer. All we were told was to fill out the form and go through the lengthy process.

14. If the city is concerned about ever having to remove or replace the concrete (an event clearly unlikely in the foreseeable future since this stretch of Lyndale Avenue South is brand new), any maintenance issues could go underneath the sidewalk. In fact, we've witnessed this happen during the Lyndale reconstruction project as new gas lines were installed right down the center of the existing sidewalks. They went right underneath the entire block.

15. Finally, we believe this *is* a good, sound idea. We look forward to a speedy resolution of our request so we can get the sidewalk poured and usable.

Please, just drive by our properties, take a look, and see what we mean. If you take time to do so, we believe you'd agree it would be a good addition to the boulevard.

Thank you for considering our proposal and we look forward to hearing your decision.

Respectfully submitted,


Jim Schoepke


Tom Backen

Property owners of 3648 Lyndale Avenue South and 3644 Lyndale Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55409

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Jim's email: jschoepke@comcast.net

Tom's cell phone: 612-875-3648
Tom's email: tbacken@comcast.net