

August 14, 2025

Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission
c/o Laura Jester

Subject: Letters of Support for Fruen Mill Redevelopment Variance

Dear Commissioners,

Please find a set of letters of support from various forms of government, city leadership, neighborhood groups and neighbors attached, supporting our variance request from Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission.

1. City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development (Erik Hansen, Director)
2. Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association (Brian Treece, President)
3. City of Minneapolis Ward 7 Councilmember (Katie Cashman, Councilmember)
4. City of Minneapolis Police Department 4th Ward (Inspector Charles Adams)
5. Nearby Neighbors (Anna Peterson and Ryan Atwell)
6. Nearby Neighbor (Niels Kerkhof)

Thank you,
Winston Wildebush
Graffiti Mill LLC

July 10, 2025

Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission
c/o Laura Jester, Administrator

Subject: Variance Request for Fruen Mill Redevelopment

Dear Commissioners,

As Director of Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED) for the City of Minneapolis, I write to express strong support for the variance request related to the reuse of the existing basement at the historic Fruen Mill site. This request supports a catalytic redevelopment that aligns with the City's goals for economic revitalization, environmental sustainability, and historic preservation.

The Fruen Mill has long stood as a prominent but deteriorating structure along Bassett Creek—an attractive nuisance with impacts to public health and safety. The current project represents the first viable opportunity in decades to convert this legacy site into a public asset. Through thoughtful design, the development will activate this long-shuttered building and remove acres of impervious concrete, improve stormwater management, and provide more public access to the creek corridor.

The developer has a long track record of environmentally responsible projects including several award-winning stormwater and landscape designs as founder and CEO of Stone Brewing. He is bringing that same level of commitment to Minneapolis. His deep investment in this site, his commitment to hiring locally, and his environmental stewardship represent an extraordinary opportunity for the city and the watershed alike.

This variance from the watershed is essential to unlocking the full public, environmental, and economic value of this redevelopment. From a water resources perspective, we are committed to following the watershed district's lead in terms of approval of any mitigation plans to manage the water on site. The project still requires land use approvals, which will be a future step.

We are committed to working with the developer to put the site back into productive reuse. I respectfully urge the Commission to support the request and help bring this vision to life.

Sincerely,



Erik Hansen
Director



**BRYN MAWR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
2915 WAYZATA BLVD
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55405**

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association (BMNA), I am writing to express our support for the redevelopment of the Fruen Mill.

The Fruen Mill is a long-standing structure and a prominent part of the historical and cultural fabric of the Bryn Mawr neighborhood. For many years, the site has sat vacant and deteriorating, representing not only a lost opportunity for our community but also a public safety concern. The proposed redevelopment offers a rare chance to preserve and adaptively reuse this landmark, transforming it into a vibrant and economically productive part of our neighborhood.

The project's development team has engaged with the community, and we are encouraged by their commitment to working closely with Bryn Mawr residents, hiring locally, and investing long-term in the area. Their plans reflect an effort to honor the site's history while bringing new vitality to the neighborhood and respecting environmental considerations.

While we as a neighborhood association have a standing policy of not weighing in on specific variance requests due to their complexity, we would love to see this important project move forward. We believe it aligns with the broader interests of the community and the city, and represents a thoughtful balance between environmental stewardship and responsible urban revitalization.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brian Treece
BMNA President

July 24, 2025

Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission
P.O. Box 270825
Golden Valley, MN 55427

Dear Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission Members,

As the Ward 7 Minneapolis City Council Member, Chair of the Council's Climate & Infrastructure Committee, and a member of the Council's Business, Housing, and Zoning Committee, I am pleased to offer my support for the redevelopment of the Fruen Mill site led by Graffiti Mill LLC and its application for variance approval at the Commission's August meeting.

The team has represented to me well how their significant clean-up efforts and water testing support granting their requested variance in the Bassett Creek's floodplain. I do not believe that their plans will harm the Bassett Creek Watershed, rather I believe that this project is consistent with protecting this essential natural resource. I expect them to be careful and considerate stewards of the Bassett Creek Watershed during their redevelopment efforts and beyond. Further, I see an opportunity through this project and its vision for visitor interaction with the natural environment to increase public awareness of the Bassett Creek Watershed and to increase interest in its conservation.

The redevelopment plans are an opportunity to transform what is currently a significant risk to public health into a notable destination for local residents and visitors to our city alike. These plans are consistent for a vision of the City of Minneapolis that is healthy, vital, and connected to its history. In my roles on the Business, Housing, and Zoning and Climate & Infrastructure committee, I am positioned well to support and oversee the Fruen Mill redevelopment by raising relevant considerations on both Committees.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this important work. I look forward to seeing the positive impacts of this redevelopment for residents, visitors, and the natural environment, especially Bassett Creek.

Sincerely,



Katie Cashman

Ward 7 City Council Member

City of Minneapolis

Katie.cashman@minneapolismn.gov

Ward7@minneapolismn.gov

612-673-2207

RE: Support for Fruen Mill Redevelopment – Variance Request

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Inspector Adams, and I lead the 4th Precinct of the Minneapolis Police Department. I’m writing to offer my full support for the variance request associated with the Fruen Mill redevelopment—specifically, the proposed reuse of the existing basement.

I was born and raised in North Minneapolis and have known the Fruen Mill site my entire life. For decades, it has stood as a decaying and dangerous structure—an attractive nuisance that has drawn in urban explorers, trespassers, and curious youth with tragic consequences. Over the years, my officers and colleagues in the Fire Department have responded to countless calls for break-ins, accidents, injuries, and sadly, a fatality that still weighs on this community.

This building is not just a safety risk—it’s been a burden on public safety resources and a source of concern for nearby residents for far too long. The proposed redevelopment offers the first real chance in decades to change that.

This is more than just a construction project—it’s a public safety solution. Securing, restoring, and activating this site will eliminate one of the area’s longest-standing hazards. It will replace blight with positive investment and help stabilize a corner of our community that has lived in the shadow of this structure for too long.

I urge the Commission to support the variance request. This project represents not only smart redevelopment—but a meaningful step toward a safer, stronger, and more vibrant North Minneapolis.

Sincerely,

Inspector Charles Adams
4th Precinct Inspector
Minneapolis Police Department

July 3, 2025

Dear Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission,

We are writing to support the development efforts of the Fruen Mill property by Greg Koch, Winston Wildebush, and their team. As neighbors and leaders of local conservation efforts, we believe that Fruen Mill is a historic icon, but also a public nuisance and a challenge to use and conservation of an important Minneapolis corridor of green space. We believe that the history, plans, and processes being implemented by the current owners and their team are in the best interests of Ĥaĥá Wakpádaŋ / Bassett Creek, its adjoining neighborhoods, and the Minneapolis metro.

We have been neighbors of the mill and Bassett Creek since 2019, with our backyard backing up to Bassett's Creek Park. Soon after moving to the neighborhood, we inherited voluntary management of a Bassett's Creek Park habitat stewardship effort that is a long-standing partnership of Bryn Mawr neighborhood association. BCWMC supported the habitat restoration planning efforts of this neighborhood stewardship group. In our professional capacity, we were a partner on a recent [project](#) that illustrated the importance of Bassett's Creek Park and the steam corridor to the Harrison Neighborhood and North Minneapolis community. We are long-term lovers of Bassett Creek, having canoed and naturalized in the creek corridor for years. We also used to live on Medicine Lake and help with lake water quality monitoring efforts.

As their plans to develop Fruen Mill have progressed, Greg and Winston have invited neighbors to be part of the conversation, gather input, and address concerns. We appreciate that Greg hired Winston, a respected leader in the neighborhood, to help lead this effort. We have been in conversation with them about the importance of water quality, stream access, and natural habitat to residents of Harrison and Bryn Mawr neighborhoods. They share a vision of the future health of the Bassett Creek greenway with our neighborhood stewards' group. Their vision is to create a space of beauty used by the public that would enhance access and use of the Bassett Creek corridor of green space.

For decades, the neighborhood has been concerned about the challenges and development potential of the Fruen Mill complex. We believe that the plans of the current owners create an extremely unique opportunity to develop this property while improving use and conservation of the creek. We encourage BMWMC to work with Greg, Winston, and their team to ensure that development moves forward in ways that protect and enhance Bassett Creek and its green space that is the life blood of the west metro.

Thank you for your work to care for Ĥaĥá Wakpádaŋ / Bassett Creek!

Sincerely,



Anna Peterson
anna@naturewerks.com
280 Vincent Ave. N., Minneapolis



Ryan Atwell
ryan@naturewerks.com
280 Vincent Ave. N., Minneapolis

Niels Kerkhof

292 Vincent Ave N

Minneapolis, MN 55405

July 25, 2025

Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing as a neighbor in strong support of Graffiti Mill's redevelopment plans for the Fruen Mill site, including their request for a variance to allow use of the existing basement level.

As someone who lives nearby at 292 Vincent Ave N, I've long been concerned about the condition of the Fruen Mill. The site has not just been underutilized - it has stood abandoned, in visible decay, and poses real safety and environmental concerns for the neighborhood. Its current state is a disservice to the community and to the potential of the area.

The vision Graffiti Mill shared at the May open house was thoughtful and inspiring. It's clear they want to preserve the history of the site while turning it into something creative, vibrant, and safe. Supporting this variance is a step toward transforming a dangerous eyesore into a meaningful neighborhood asset.

I fully support their efforts and urge you to grant the variance request.

Sincerely,

Niels Kerkhof

niels@kerkhof.be