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## **Once Upon a Time in North Park**

### **Drowsy Maggie's**

**By Steve Hon**

One of the final two sites being considered for the new North Park Library is at the corner of 31<sup>st</sup> and University Avenue. In several of the articles that have appeared on the work of the Library Task Force, that location is often referred to as the Drowsy Maggie's site. North Park residents who have moved into the neighborhood since 1991 may wonder, "What is Drowsy Maggie's?"

To clear up any confusion, Drowsy Maggie's was the name of a restaurant and alcohol-free nightclub that operated at 3089 University Avenue from June 1, 1981 through mid April 1991. The proprietor of Drowsy Maggie's was Marcus Robbins who set a goal of establishing a music venue where customers could listen to an eclectic mix of alternative music ranging from jazz, blues, and traditional folk to ethnic music from around the world. Live music was available seven nights a week.

Although Drowsy Maggie's could have probably succeeded on the merits of its menu alone, the live music made it a special place which is why many people have such fond memories of the establishment that over 12 years after it closed its doors, people still are referring to the location by that name. The musicians performed for tips only and while the very loud cappuccino machine located in the dining and listening area could be annoying to both the musicians and the customers, Drowsy Maggie's was a key outlet for local musicians to display their talent for over ten years.

Marcus Robbins closed Drowsy Maggie's in April 1991 after his rent was raised from \$1,400 a month to \$3,500 a month and the cost increase made it too expensive to continue. After Drowsy Maggie's closed, there were some other businesses that occupied the location until a serious fire caused by a car hitting a gas meter caused extensive damage to the building. Since the fire, the building has remained boarded up and vacant for many years.