

Communications Received via email by the Parks Division related to the 1259 East Johnson Landscape Appeal. These emails are listed in reverse chronological order and appear in the format that they were received. This compilation of communication includes all emails received as of Wednesday April 4<sup>th</sup> at noon.

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**From:** Tyler Bouressa <[tlbouressa@yahoo.com](mailto:tlbouressa@yahoo.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 04, 2012 8:31 AM  
**To:** Briski, Kevin <[KBriski@cityofmadison.com](mailto:KBriski@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Cc:** Hank, George <[GHank@cityofmadison.com](mailto:GHank@cityofmadison.com)>; Maniaci, Bridget <[district2@cityofmadison.com](mailto:district2@cityofmadison.com)>; [ken\\_backus@yahoo.com](mailto:ken_backus@yahoo.com) <[ken\\_backus@yahoo.com](mailto:ken_backus@yahoo.com)>  
**Subject:** My Neighbor's Landscaping situation

Good Morning!

My fiance Rachel and I live on the 1300 block of East Dayton Street. After voting yesterday, we were informed of a disturbing situation at 1259 E. Johnson St. Rachel and I both hold this property in high regards within our neighborhood. The landscaping done outside of the property is beautiful, and I wish more people would do similar things with their own properties. I was genuinely confused upon hearing that the city is requiring the removal of the landscaping. Unless a tree is blocking the entire stop-light, I'm not really certain why the city would demand that all plantings fall within a 24 inch growth-limit. This doesn't make any sense. If it is a permit problem, then I'm sure a solution can be found. Maybe the city needs to look at their rules and regulations a bit differently. I feel badly that somebody's investment into their property and beautifying the neighborhood could come to such an unreasonable solution. I wish for a more progressive decision to be made regarding this property, and any future properties in our wonderful city. Thanks a lot for your time.

Sincerely,  
Tyler and Rachel

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**From:** Sharon Kilfoy <[SharonK@centerforfamilies.org](mailto:SharonK@centerforfamilies.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 03, 2012 5:15 PM  
**To:** Briski, Kevin <[KBriski@cityofmadison.com](mailto:KBriski@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Cc:** Hank, George <[GHank@cityofmadison.com](mailto:GHank@cityofmadison.com)>; Maniaci, Bridget <[district2@cityofmadison.com](mailto:district2@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Subject:** Baldwin / Johnson Garden

Hi,  
I have worked at Center for Families or one of its programs for more than 25 years. We are located at 2120 Fordem Avenue. I live on Willy Street and take Baldwin Street to Johnson Street - then to Fordem Avenue to get to work each morning. My route is reversed each evening.  
As you might imagine, I have taken note of the garden on this corner day-in and day-out for all of these years. It has given me much pleasure and a welcome respite from the trying work of supporting struggling families. I am sure I am not alone in my appreciation for the continuous benefit that I have derived unbeknownst from a fellow citizen.  
Please do whatever you can to allow this garden to continue to thrive. Please work with the gardener in a spirit of encouragement - your real duty as a public servant. And please re-write any codes necessary to allow and encourage citizen participation in the beautification of the town we all cherish for its beauty.



Sharon Kilfoy  
Staff Writer  
Office: 608-729-1140  
[sharonk@centerforfamilies.org](mailto:sharonk@centerforfamilies.org)

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**From:** patricia Kelly <[pjkmifflin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pjkmifflin@sbcglobal.net)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 03, 2012 12:15 PM  
**To:** Briski, Kevin <[KBriski@cityofmadison.com](mailto:KBriski@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Cc:** Hank, George <[GHank@cityofmadison.com](mailto:GHank@cityofmadison.com)>; Maniaci, Bridget <[district2@cityofmadison.com](mailto:district2@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Subject:** Garden at 1259 E. Johnson

Hello,

As a neighbor in district two who both drives and walks regularly near the home at 1259 E. Johnson I am concerned that the homeowner is being asked to severely cut back on his beautiful plantings. I have never had visual or physical interference while driving or walking due to these plantings. The owner of this property, in fact, enchances my experience in the neighborhood because of his beautiful and thoughtful landscaping. For instance, rather than looking at an ugly, yellow utility box I see living green.

I encourage you to reconsider your order that many of these plantings be removed or reduced.  
Pat Kelly

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**From:** Anna Caravello Stebbins [<mailto:astebbin@hotmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 02, 2012 9:22 AM  
**To:** [BridgetManiacidistrict2@cityomadison.com](mailto:BridgetManiacidistrict2@cityomadison.com)  
**Cc:** Briski, Kevin; Hank, George  
**Subject:** 1259 East Johnson

I am emailing you regarding Ken Backus and the intersection of Johnson and Baldwin. I have lived in Madison for over 55 years, forty of those years as a resident of the northside. I drive through that intersection numerous times daily and cannot understand why the plantings would ever be considered hazardous.

Those plantings should be allowed to remain and the city should spend its time on the many other intersections that desperately need attention like the corner of Doty and Henry. With all the parked cars, one cannot see the traffic coming up Henry Street. It is a 3-way stop with a blocked view of the cars who do not have to stop. I see near missed accidents there daily.

Sincerely,

Anna M. Stebbins  
3618 Alpine Road  
Madison, WI 53704-2244  
608-249-8406

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**From:** Jacqueline Kaplan [<mailto:jkaplan322@yahoo.com>]  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 01, 2012 5:28 PM  
**To:** Briski, Kevin  
**Cc:** Hank, George; Maniaci, Bridget; [ken\\_bakus@yahoo.com](mailto:ken_bakus@yahoo.com)  
**Subject:** 1259 E. Johnson Landscape Removal

Dear Mr. Briski;

I want to express my support of Ken and the terrace plantings at 1259 E. Johnson..

I have lived on Marston St. for almost 30 years. I have seen the neighborhood when it was in decline and as it has flourished in recent years. This corner especially, with it's storefront first floor and limited parking had the

potential of becoming an eyesore.

Unless there have been a significant number of vehicle accidents on the corner due to his landscaping, I feel it has become an important enhancement to the neighborhood and I feel it should stay.

Sincerely,  
Jackie Kaplan  
322 Marston

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**From:** Shannon Barry [<mailto:shanzke74@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** Saturday, March 31, 2012 3:32 PM

**To:** Briski, Kevin

**Cc:** Hank, George; Maniaci, Bridget

**Subject:** Corner of Baldwin and Johnson

Dear Mr. Briski and Mr. Hank:

I am so incredibly disappointed to learn of the City of Madison's demands that the owner of the property at 1259 E. Johnson Street remove the gorgeous gardens that he has worked so hard to create.

I have lived on the north or east side of Madison for the last 35 years. Currently my husband and I live near East High School and I commute to my job on the west side through the Johnson and Gorham corridor. During rush hours I often stop at the light on the corner of Baldwin and Johnson and while sitting at the red light, I admire the beautiful urban oasis that has been thoughtfully created on that corner. As an amateur gardener myself, I draw inspiration from the beautiful plantings (and admittedly fight off my envy for whomever lives in the first floor apartment and has the fortune to look upon such a lovely view every day).

I cannot imagine why the City would ask that this homeowner destroy such a wonderful garden. It does nothing but beautify our neighborhood -- I have never experienced any problems on that corner as either a pedestrian or a driver. This property is obviously well cared for and loved. I would much prefer that the City of Madison devote its efforts and resources on encouraging property owners who neglect their properties to do their part to keep our city beautiful rather than spending time on asking someone who has created such an artistic and lovely space to demolish it.

Please reconsider the City's demand that the landscaping be removed. Please preserve this treasure of the east side.

Respectfully,  
Shannon Barry  
110 N. Second Street  
Madison, Wisconsin 53704

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**From:** mary alice wimmer [<mailto:maliceart@charter.net>]

**Sent:** Saturday, March 31, 2012 1:01 PM

**To:** [BridgetManiacidistrict2@cityomadison.com](mailto:BridgetManiacidistrict2@cityomadison.com)

**Cc:** Briski, Kevin; Hank, George

**Subject:** 1259 East Johnson

As resident of 1654 Sherman, and over thirty years at previous Madison addresses, I have a good idea of most busy corners in Madison. Increasingly, structures are slammed up against the sidewalk with no effort to provide plantings. These are often corner buildings. When, as in the case of the 100 Block State and

Fairchild, and The Edgewater, green spaces are offered, the proposals are rejected. Citizens don't want a concrete city, but we are rapidly becoming one.

Regarding traffic hazards, having passed through this intersection thousands of times, I can assure you the plantings are not a hazard. There is an arrow here. (Unlike Baldwin and East Washington, where there SHOULD be an arrow.) There is vehicular, cycle, running and walking traffic enjoying this lovely corner at Johnson and Baldwin.

Ken Backus deserves to be praised and encouraged for his endeavors to beautify an otherwise bland corner. He has accomplished this with his own time, research, and money. Please allow the plantings to remain!

Sincerely,

M.A.Wimmer

Mary Alice Wimmer/ Painting&Drawing  
Professor Emerita, UW Colleges  
1654 Sherman Avenue  
Madison, WI 53704  
608 241 0821  
mobile: 608 444 3001

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**From:** Sheryl Theo [\[mailto:theos@firstweber.com\]](mailto:theos@firstweber.com)

**Sent:** Friday, March 30, 2012 3:07 PM

**To:** Briski, Kevin

**Subject:** 1259 East Johnson St

Hi Kevin,

I live in the neighborhood and I am at that intersection many times a day every day of the week. The plantings are really not a problem at all!!! It looks very nice.

Check out the 2<sup>nd</sup> house from the corner going toward the park on the right hand side of the street-it looks really bad!! Make them clean that mess up!!

Sheryl

**Sheryl Theo**

**Vice President Relocation**

5250 East Terrace Dr. Suite I

Madison, WI 53718

Direct:(608)443-2272 Fax: (608)441-3261

*LOCALLY OWNED \* REGIONALLY DOMINANT \* GLOBALLY CONNECTED*

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**From:** Ellen Hansen [\[mailto:ej67hansen@gmail.com\]](mailto:ej67hansen@gmail.com)

**Sent:** Friday, March 30, 2012 11:03 AM

**To:** Briski, Kevin; Hank, George

**Cc:** Maniaci, Bridget; [ken\\_backus@yahoo.com](mailto:ken_backus@yahoo.com)

**Subject:** Landscaping of Property at E. Johnson/N. Baldwin Streets

Dear Mr. Briski and Mr. Hank:

I am writing to request that you reconsider your directive to Ken Backus to remove the landscaping that he has added to his property on the corner of E. Johnson and N. Baldwin streets.

I live on the same corner, in the property diagonally across the intersection. I greatly appreciate the beautiful landscaping he has installed. I think the city should be encouraging homeowners, particularly in the downtown area, to make similar investments to beautify the neighborhood.

I recognize that there are safety concerns regarding visibility for drivers at the intersection. However I would hope that some accommodation could be made that would preserve the majority of the shrubbery that is presently there. This is particularly true in light of the fact that the owner has spoken to you previously and was told that he could install plantings. In addition, there are a number of residences in the neighborhood that have plantings in the terrace; I expect that a number have not obtained permits from the city.

I hope that a compromise can be reached to resolve this situation.

Kind regards,

Ellen Hansen  
305 N. Baldwin St.

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**From:** Matthew Panosh [<mailto:mpanosh@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 29, 2012 6:45 PM  
**To:** Briski, Kevin  
**Cc:** Maniaci, Bridget; Hank, George  
**Subject:** Pending decision on landscaping at 1259 East Johnson Street

Dear Mr. Briski,

I would like the City of Madison to not consider the foliage in front of 1259 East Johnson Street a traffic hazard. The corner of the property line is at a controlled intersection. The foliage is not detrimental to a driver's line of sight.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and for your good service to our fine city.

Best Regards,  
Matthew Panosh

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**From:** Dustin Struckmeyer [<mailto:dustin.struckmeyer@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 29, 2012 6:25 PM  
**To:** Briski, Kevin  
**Cc:** Hank, George; Maniaci, Bridget  
**Subject:** Baldwin and Johnson Landscaping Concern

To Whom This May Concern,

I am writing in regard to the property and landscaping at the corner of Baldwin and Johnson. It is my understanding that the city is requiring Mr. Ken Backus to remove all of the landscaping on his property at this corner on both Baldwin and Johnson Streets. While I understand the City has specific ordinances regarding this

type of thing, I cannot help but wonder if such a drastic order is necessary. I know Mr. Backus and the effort to which he has gone to maintain and establish his gardens. It is a lovely corner and his hard work has provided I'm sure many a passer-by, motorist and neighbor at the very least a smile. Please reconsider the City's decision or consider working with Mr. Backus to reach a reasonable compromise so as not to completely destroy the lovely plantings there. I thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration regarding this matter.

Respectfully,

**Dustin Struckmeyer**  
ASID, LEED AP ID+C

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**From:** Nancy Higgs [<mailto:nancy.a.higgs@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 28, 2012 10:05 PM  
**To:** Maniaci, Bridget  
**Cc:** Hank, George; Briski, Kevin  
**Subject:** Landscaping at 1259 E Johnson St

Hello,

I live near the intersection of E Johnson St and Baldwin St and would like to comment on the landscaping issue at 1259 E Johnson St. I find it a breath of fresh air to have a nicely landscaped area to walk through every day. It lessens the blow of being being a former homeowner that now rents on a busy street. One of the many reasons I love this city is the abundance of character. Landscaping in general - and this landscaping specifically - enhances our environment and community alike. If we take away the personality this and other landscaping provides, we will be left looking like all the other generic cities. I think it would be ludicrous to remove all of this beautiful yard work - surely there is compromise to be found.

Thank you for your time,

Nancy Higgs  
1247 E Johnson St Apt 5

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**From:** Heidi Vargas [<mailto:vargasnunez@att.net>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 27, 2012 3:09 PM  
**To:** Briski, Kevin  
**Cc:** Hank, George; Maniaci, Bridget  
**Subject:** Support for Ken Backus landscaping on E. Johnson & N. Baldwin

Dear City of Madison,

I am writing in support of Mr. Backus' lovely landscaping on the corner of Baldwin and E. Johnson. I find it positively ludicrous that the city would ask him to remove it. For what reason? If it is for sight lines when turning right around the corner from E. Johnson onto N. Baldwin, I have no problem turning, since the oncoming traffic from two directions is completely visible. The city would do far better for the safety of the intersection to focus its efforts on fixing the darn intersection! I have seen cars whizzing down the hill literally take to the air when they hit that hideous bump with the manhole cover sticking out. Furthermore, for some odd reason, cars turning left from N. Baldwin onto E. Johnson heading west want to turn BEHIND cars turning left from N. Baldwin onto E. Johnson heading east. Many people from our Tenney Lapham neighborhood have requested painted lines for turn lanes, which has never been done. We have also requested better pedestrian

crossing lights since our elementary school is on Dayton street, and there are two bus stations on opposite corners. I can not tell you how many times I have squeaked by getting hit in that intersection—pregnant, with children, and on bicycles! In the 14 years I have lived in this neighborhood, there have been significant road and neighborhood improvements, except for this one dangerous intersection. I guarantee you that Mr. Backus' landscaping is NOT the culprit here.

And to what end is the city requesting the removal of the landscaping on Baldwin? The lovely shrubs do not obstruct the sidewalk—on the contrary, they make for a pleasant walk up the hill. What would the city have placed there instead? The farcical "grass" that was planted on the terrace when they repaved our street? I had a lovely bed of weeds two weeks later and it has taken me years of composting to get anything to grow there. Or how about the "landscaping" planted in the new islands on E. Washington. Only a couple of years later and they are also a weedy eye sore. If the city has extra time on its hands to scope out unacceptable landscaping, they might better use that time weeding and tending to the landscaping they have deemed appropriate.

I apologize for some of my sarcasm, because in truth, I am a devoted Madisonian who loves my city and my neighborhood. Perhaps this is why I am so dumbfounded by the city's misplaced energy and attention to Mr. Backus' landscaping. It contributes greenery to our streetscape. It is a landmark building and a landmark corner that has been lovingly tended. Please focus attention on the things that need fixing.

Sincerely,  
Heidi Vargas  
1240 Elizabeth Street

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**From:** Ryan Malmgren [<mailto:ryan@madsails.com>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 27, 2012 7:45 AM  
**To:** Briski, Kevin  
**Cc:** Hank, George; Maniaci, Bridget  
**Subject:** Ken Backus Landscaping -- 1259 E Johnson Street

Mr. Briski, Hank and Ms Maniaci,

I'm writing in regard to Ken Backus' property at 1259 E Johnson Street.

I'm extremely surprised and disappointed in the city's threatening stance in regard to Mr. Backus' beautiful landscaping. Mr, Backus has tastefully selected and nurtured a beautiful landscape at the corner of Baldwin and Johnson for years. His work is a credit to the Tenney Park/Baldwin neighborhood. I'm usually very proud of our city and it's tolerance for creativity, beauty and passion... and am very disappointed that in this case the city appears to be taking a stance of cold intolerance.

I hope you will do the right thing.... and reasses your position and allow Mr Backus to retain his beautiful landscaping that is a credit to our wonderful city and people like Mr Backus himself. Surely there must be a solution that doesn't require the heartless removal of years of care and thought Mr. Backus has invested in that corner.

Yours, Ryan Malmgren

Ryan Malmgren  
Mad Sails  
2528 Todd Drive

Madison, WI 53713

608.225.4287

[www.madsails.com](http://www.madsails.com)

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**From:** steve reinhardt [<mailto:stevereinhardt81@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** Monday, March 26, 2012 6:15 PM

**To:** Briski, Kevin

**Cc:** Hank, George; Maniaci, Bridget

**Subject:** 1259 E Johnson St

Hello,

My name is Steve Reinhardt and I live at 1425 E Johnson. I have recently become aware of Ken Backus' problem with the potential mandated removal of his landscaping. I would like to voice my opinion as a member of the neighborhood to allow him to keep his plantings. The work he has done looks great and adds to the beauty and charm of the neighborhood (helping to raise property values). I could see the shrubs being a traffic issue if there were no stop lights at that intersection, but there are.

Thanks for your time.

Steve