

**From:** [Planning](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** FW: 5116/5118 Spring Ct  
**Date:** Friday, June 21, 2024 2:31:24 PM  
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**From:** Alice Erickson <[alicatraz@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alicatraz@sbcglobal.net)>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 21, 2024 2:03 PM  
**To:** Planning <[planning@cityofmadison.com](mailto:planning@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Subject:** 5116/5118 Spring Ct

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Planning Commission,

It's bad enough that the commission approved throwing in the dump, two perfectly good homes (when our landfills are already stretched) for no good reason. One house not even 20 years old. And then of course comes the constant noise, dust and parking. BUT really, I have to sit here in my house across the street and feel it **SHAKE** while the demolition occurs. And please note, the owner is nowhere to be seen. She is living 1/2 mile on the lake in a very quiet area. She does not have to deal with years of this as she builds her kingdom (which undoubtedly she'll move from in 5 years- as it goes in this neighborhood. Also please note, in the attached article about this same house from 2006 Matt Tucker indicates you don't want a 12,000 sq ft house next to 4000 sq ft houses. Well now you've allowed a 10,000 sq ft house next to houses ranging from 800 sq ft to 3500 sq ft. What is this city thinking??? Next in this project, down comes an enormous beautiful canopy tree housing how many animals and providing shade. No plans for replacement.

The city is going to the dogs (well actually the rich).

Alice Erickson  
5109 Spring Ct

PS If you want to have a fair meeting, have them in person. A zoom where you talk to a blank screen not knowing if anyone is even at their computer is worthless.

# Taking aim at lake monsters

Zoning code could restrict the size of new dwellings

**W**hen Alice Erickson moved to the Spring Harbor neighborhood in 1979, it was a quaint cottage neighborhood on Lake Mendota. But starting around 1990, a new wave of people moved in, cutting down trees, tearing down houses and building "super-sized homes on very small lots" in their place.

"Our street, up 'til about six years ago, had one-car garages or no garages," says Erickson, who lives on Spring Court. "Now we're getting three-car garages, tremendous amounts of paving."

In Spring Harbor and elsewhere, disagreements over monstrous lakefront dwellings have led to bitter contention. Erickson says she's been threatened by some of her new neighbors as she's pushed for modest construction. "It's like the Hatfields and the McCoys, the lakeside and the non-lakeside."

The committee currently rewriting the city's zoning codes is proposing to limit the size of new construction by finding the ratio of current houses to their lots, says Matt Tucker, city zoning administrator. The city would look at all houses within 1,000 feet of proposed construction to calculate the average ratio.

"You could have new houses no more than 125% of what that ratio is," Tucker says. "You don't want to have that one 12,000-square-foot house among those 4,000-square-foot houses."

For lakeside property, the city will calculate the average setback for the five houses on both sides of new construction. The setback for new homes will be this average, or 30% of the lot's depth, whichever is greater. "So eventually," says Tucker, "you'll have a line in the sand."

Janet Loewi, a past president of the Spring Harbor neighborhood association, says clear zoning code regulations could help ease conflicts. "Then neighbors wouldn't have to go and object to their neighbor's [building] plans, which leads to an uncomfortable situation."

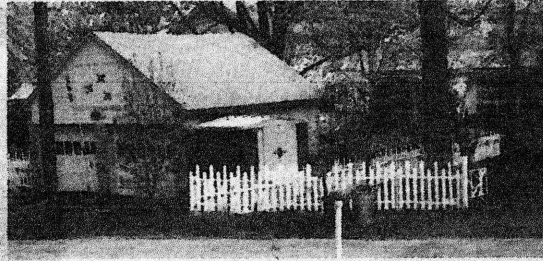
Erickson says it's too late to save her street — the damage is done. But she wants other lakefront neighborhoods protected.

"When we moved into our house, we were really on the outskirts," she says. "And now we're basically in the heart of the city. We have to adapt to that. But some of the things that are happening to the land really shouldn't be."

## CDA doing less with less

Faced with a \$500,000 budget shortfall, the Madison Community Development Authority has asked the federal government for permission to reduce its subsidy for Section 8 housing vouchers to the poor.

"There really isn't much additional money going into the program at a time when costs are going up because of the economy," says Tom Conrad, the CDA's Section 8 manager.



The view on Spring Court in 1980 (above) and today.



## An administrator for Madison

Madison Ald. Michael Schumacher launched a blog, True North ([son.blogspot.com](http://son.blogspot.com)), and one entry begins with a question: "Without an election? At no additional cost? Sounds too good to be true?"

Maybe it's not most people's idea of a positive response to his idea of becoming a city administrator.

"I had nobody saying, 'This is nonsense,'" Schumacher says. "I had a lot of people saying, 'This is interesting. I want to know more.'"

City administrators differ from political managers, who are like appointees to answer to the council. A city administrator is a professional, not a politician. He or she supervises city departments and spearheads training efforts to make the city more creative and efficient.

"When a department head engages a mayoral aide, that department must be thinking somewhere in the back of his mind, 'This is a political interaction; the mayor thinks?'" Schumacher says. "The administrator acts as a buffer."

The position could be created with extra funding by channeling staff away from the mayor's office. "Then you have six [mayoral] aides maybe cut," he says. "The savings you would then use for the administrative office."

Schumacher thinks the idea has merit. "But he doesn't plan to give it a hard sell. If the end of the day nobody wants it, then no deal."

That may be the case. Rachel Strauss, spokeswoman for Dave Cieslewicz, says she "appreciated Michael's ideas, but decided it's right for Madison." ♦

## MAD TALK

### City collects neighborhood stats

What's the best neighborhood in Madison? The worst?

Andrew Statz, Madison's fiscal efficiency auditor, won't hazard a guess. But he's been compiling lists of statistics on city neighborhoods as part of Madison's Neighborhood Indicators program.

Statz says the city is looking to measure crime, health, economic vitality, housing, schools, transportation and community involvement. The city is looking at 45 indicators, all existing data, available in a format that allows for side-by-side comparisons at [www.planning.wisc.edu/madison/snapshot.html](http://www.planning.wisc.edu/madison/snapshot.html).

The city has already posted data on five neighborhoods (Brambleton Addition, Burr Oaks

hood. I think that's true,"

Statz says. "But it's not part of the knowledge we're trying to get at."

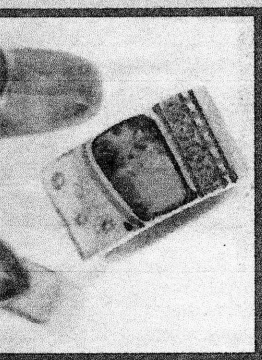
The idea, borrowed from other cities, is to compile meaningful neighborhood statistics. Most people think of the city's neighborhood liaison, Joel "What we're really aiming for is quality."

City officials hope the stats will help when a neighborhood is in distress. "We may have some neighborhoods suffering silently, that aren't connected," Statz says.



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