

CAPITOL

NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.
MADISON, WISCONSIN

February 21, 2012

Mr. Brad Murphy
City of Madison
Planning Department
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Madison, WI 53703

Re: 204 W. Main St. & 31 S. Henry St.
Diocese of Madison Demolition Request

Dear Mr. Murphy,

Representatives of the Diocese of Madison attended a regular monthly meeting of the Bassett neighborhood on February 12 to present information related to their request to demolish the two referenced buildings.

Residents in attendance were generally supportive of this request understanding that the plans to construct a new cathedral are indefinite at this time. However, during the discussion several concerns were expressed.

After the cathedral was demolished the seeding and maintenance of that site did not receive appropriate follow up. The seeding is very thin to this day. Erosion from the site continued over the sidewalk for months if not for more than a year. This created a hazard to pedestrians. A small gully still exists on the site. Remnants of the erosion control features remain on the site to this day partially buried in silt.

With the new site the corner at W. Washington has a much steeper grade. Adequate ongoing maintenance will be even more important to insure that the site is stabilized. A written plan that identifies a frequency of site inspections, follow up activities, remedial actions and which assigns responsibility for these actions is recommended.

The plans show Community Garden Plots. The Diocese representatives indicated that the Parish has not committed to establishing the community gardens at this point but is considering them. Other questions arose regarding operations of the gardens; Is there a water source? Will tools or equipment be stored onsite and if so where and in what? Will mulch or garden waste be stored on site? Answers to these questions could not be provided. At this time it does not appear that the concept of

community gardens has been fully thought through. There was no alternate landscaping plan should the community gardens not be installed.

The general consensus of residents is that the landscaping at the W. Washington corner should be exceptional as part of a main entry to the Square. This is particularly important given the indefinite nature of future plans for the site.

A resident inquired if the sizable existing trees and raised planting area at the W. Main St. corner would remain. The plans indicate that these trees would be removed with new trees being planted. The representatives indicated that the existing trees might be able to be saved.

The Bassett Neighborhood is supportive of the demolition request but suggests that the following conditions be included in the motion to approve;

1. The applicant shall work with City Staff to establish a written plan for ongoing maintenance of the site during the period of establishing the lawns and plantings to ensure the seeded areas are fully established and that erosion control elements are removed at an appropriate time. The seeding application shall be sufficient to establish a residential grade lawn.
2. An alternate landscaping plan shall be provided for the area currently shown as Community Garden Plots. Should the applicant decide to move forward with the gardens additional information can be provided including; dimensions, setbacks, operational details and details on any proposed structures.

Thank you for your consideration,

Peter Ostlind
Chair Bassett District
Capitol Neighborhoods