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Edgewater

Date: May 18, 2010
From: Kenneth R. Clark
To: Madison Alders
Subject: The Edgewater Project

As the former Director of the City of Madison Planning Department (1959 to 1965) I have been following the Edgewater project with great interest.

I have been particularly concerned about the number of city ordinances, policies, and plans that the City has revoked or changed just for this project.

I was involved in one of those ordinances, the 1965 Wisconsin Avenue vacation ordinance.

This 1965 ordinance required the Edgewater owners to pay for all improvements in the vacated right of way. But now when the new developer said he needed a \$16,000,000 TIF subsidy to redo the top of the addition, the Common Council revoked the prohibition on city funds.

The 1965 ordinance also required any future developer on the National Guardian Life side to maintain a 10 foot set back. Once again, when the developer told the city he wanted this requirement revoked, the city complied by changing the ordinance.

It is true that one Council cannot bind another, but it is also true that ordinances were placed on the books for good and compelling reasons. In this case we had the public good uppermost in mind, not the 1965 nor the current developer.

I was very disappointed to see these key terms of the 1965 street vacation ordinance revoked and a long list of other time-tested city policies and plans as well. These changes are not wise and far-sighted nor good public policy. Such actions jeopardize the rule of law and should not be changed so quickly and easily.