

**Melissa Mulliken and Kim Turner
3306 Gregory Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53711**

TO: Members of the Plan Commission

FROM: Kim Turner and Melissa Mulliken

RE: Item 6 on Monday, June 13 agenda: 3303 Gregory Street

DATE: June 12, 2016

We write to request the plan commission remove the condition recommended by the City Engineering Division requiring us to build a sidewalk as part of our redevelopment at 3303 Gregory Street.

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration and are available to answer any questions you might have or to discuss this matter further.

Situation Overview

We are proposing to demolish a home in poor condition at 3303 Gregory Street and build an accessible new home for our aging parents/inlaws in our very own Dudgeon-Monroe neighborhood. Since 2001, we have lived directly across the street from 3003 Gregory and will continue to do so after the new home is built. We have a sidewalk on the northside of Gregory in front of our current home (3306 Gregory) and we have not noted or heard of any concern about the lack of a sidewalk across the street. We are being asked to add one now along our new property.

There is a two block stretch covering about 470 feet, which includes our new property, between Glenway and Western on the south side of Gregory where to our knowledge no sidewalks have ever existed and certainly do not now exist.

There is sidewalk along the entire length of Gregory on the north side of the street and sidewalk on the entire southern side of Gregory from Western going east. There is no certainty that sidewalks will be built on this two-block stretch, from Glenway east to Western whenever Gregory Street is improved. Photos of the area are attached.

The following summarizes the rationale for our request.

Compelling us to install a sidewalk ‘spur’ that will, for several years and maybe longer than that, not connect to any other sidewalk, without having all the facts or a comprehensive vision of the possible street improvement plan, or whether any other sidewalk construction on these blocks is possible, is premature.

We respect the expertise of the City Engineering Division. At this time, however, their expertise has not been applied to the Gregory Street reconstruction project that City staff has said, in written communication to us, is “tentatively” scheduled for 2019 and “may” occur. Consequently, neither city engineering, nor any City staff nor elected official, can be sure of the actual timeline for, or components of, Gregory Street improvements.

Before compelling us to construct a single spur of sidewalk, which for the foreseeable future will be a sidewalk to nowhere and which will end where the grass of our neighbor's terrace begins, there should be more certainty of need and a more comprehensive view of what will, and can, happen with the Gregory Street improvements. Will sidewalks even be required or possible on these two blocks of Gregory that don't have them now? When will the Gregory Street improvement actually take place?

The blocks on the south side of Gregory (from Glenway to Western) where there are no sidewalks are offset by existing sidewalks that run the entire length of Gregory on the north side of the street. Neighbors on the south side of Gregory whose properties may be effected by sidewalk installation surely haven't been consulted yet, and if the past is any indicator, surely will not welcome the addition of sidewalks.

Perhaps most importantly, it is unclear if there is sufficient space to site sidewalks in front of the existing properties on this two-block stretch. In email communication from the City about our project on June 10, 2016, we were informed that City Engineering wants to require the construction of the sidewalk for our project "up front" because if the sidewalk construction is not integrated into our house construction process, it might not be possible to add the sidewalk later. To us, this is a clear indication that a sidewalk is not needed or truly utilitarian in this location. The lot is fairly narrow and an unusual shape with a small set back. The sidewalk will end up being sited just a few feet from the house. Perhaps that is why none has ever been built.

Owners, whether us or future owners, will not want a public sidewalk so close to the house. Arguably, the public does not want to walk on a sidewalk that is so close to a private house. We understand the principle of *caveat emptor*, but we had no reason to think that a 78-year period of not needing a sidewalk in front of 3303 Gregory would end when we improve the property, nor were we forewarned when we spoke with Planning and Zoning prior to our purchase of 3303 Gregory. Our aim is to create an accessible house. Adding a sidewalk to nowhere increases the need to shovel that sidewalk and offers no gains in accessibility.

This is a long established neighborhood, with houses built close to or at the property line. We are keeping with that ethos, within the required setbacks; adding sidewalks now will be very detrimental to the property.

A tree the Parks Division has asked us to protect would likely be destroyed by the sidewalk project.

On page four of the Planning Division Staff Report memo regarding our project, note is made of "two public street trees....The trees are in good condition and should be protected through the construction process." The sidewalk construction being recommended by City Engineering would almost certainly result in the removal of the tree on Gregory Street. We would prefer to preserve this tree for as long as practicable.

Further, to continue a sidewalk along the south side of Gregory to Glenway would most certainly result in the loss of more trees.



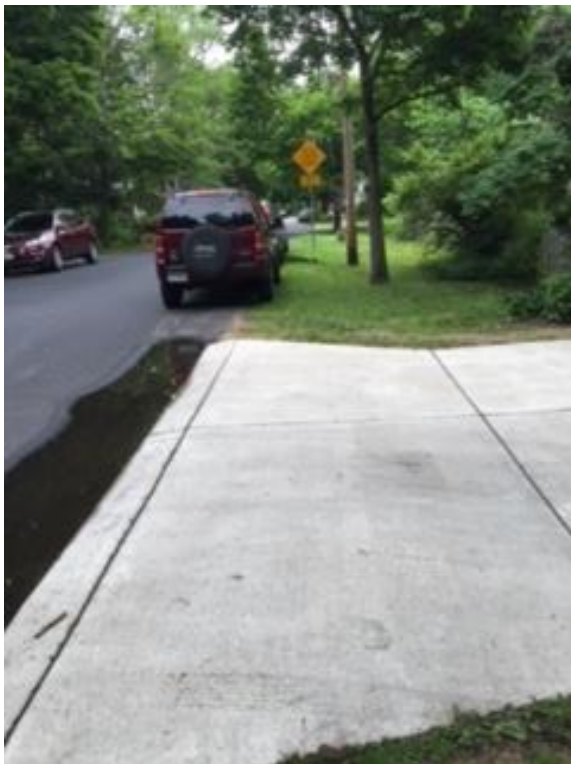
Looking east from the corner of Glenway and Gregory, southside of Gregory



Looking east, south side of Gregory in front of 3341 Gregory



Looking east, southside of Gregory from Corner of Copeland and Gregory



Looking east southside of Gregory, driveway to home at 601 Copeland that fronts on Gregory



Looking east, southside of Gregory toward corner of Western and Gregory



Looking west from corner of Gregory and Western; stake is corner of lot for 3306 Gregory



Looking west, southside of Gregory from corner of Gregory and Western



Looking south from Gregory Street, over the terrace in front of 3303 Gregory Street. White Fence is the property line, about 15 feet from edge of street



Looking west from corner of Western and Gregory in front of 3303 Gregory