



P.O. Box 296
Madison, WI 53701-0296
(608) 441-8864
info@madisonpreservation.org
www.madisonpreservation.org

VIA EMAIL

August 26, 2022

Plan Commission, City of Madison

Re: Approving a Certified Survey Map of property located at 3706 Nakoma Road
Legistar 72367

Dear Plan Commissioners:

The Madison Trust for Historic Preservation has strong concerns about the preservation of the City of Madison's sixteenth historic landmark, the Old Spring Tavern, designated more than 50 years ago. The proposed land division would allow the construction of a house on a newly configured lot that will adversely impact the Old Spring Tavern by altering the landscape that is a significant, and landmarked, component of the property. The proposed land division would severely compromise the still-present feeling of the rural landscape historically associated with the way that the property was used during the stagecoach era of the mid-19th Century and in later years.

The Old Spring Tavern is a memorable property featured on the Historic Architecture Walking Tours of the Nakoma neighborhood conducted by the Madison Trust. This tour draws people from the greater Madison area, as well visitors from out of town. As part of the tour, the group experiences first-hand a sense of the Tavern's rural context and its use as a hostelry built in 1854 to serve travelers on the historic route between Madison and Monroe. The proposed land-use change would negatively and irrevocably affect the property's ability to convey its historic significance.

In addition, a black walnut tree, perhaps 300 years old, located on the proposed new lot (and likely sited in the buildable envelope of the new parcel), connects the Tavern through the years with early indigenous inhabitants of the area. A Ho-Chunk summer village was once located on a ridge above the Tavern. Linear mounds built by the Ho-Chunk and since destroyed were in the immediate vicinity of the Tavern property. Skeletal remains and artifacts were documented in these mounds, attesting to the significance of this area to the Ho-Chunk. The intrusion of new construction on the now-open land would impair the important connection of native peoples to this landscape.

(Continued)

Dedicated to Preserving Madison's Historic Places

A local partner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation

The Madison Trust strongly urges the Commission to reject the proposed land division. Leaving the current parcel configuration intact and free of new development is essential to preserving the integrity of the Old Spring Tavern and Madison's early cultural and architectural history.

Sincerely,

Lynn Bjorkman

Lynn Bjorkman
President
Madison Trust for Historic Preservation

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