

ID# 14181

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April 20, 2009

Re: April 21, 2009, Public Hearing Before the City of Madison Common Council for Plans, Specifications, and Special Assessments for Public Works Improvements
Oak Street (500 Block) Assessable Drainage District
City of Madison Engineering Division Project ID: 53W0759

To: City of Madison, Common Council

Dear Council Members:

While I empathize with the water pooling problems reported by property owners at the north end of our block, I am opposed to being included in this special assessment.

I do not believe I contribute to the water pooling they have experienced. I've been here almost 20 years and although I have seen some water pooling in my backyard, I've never seen it run out of my yard; it always seeps into the ground. I told Lisa Coleman from the City Engineering Department that I felt there were higher backyards between me and the lower lying backyards three properties north of me. Lisa admitted that might be true. How is it then that water in my backyard could drain uphill into those lower lots?

Our entire block consists of high and low spots. Many of the low spots retain water briefly, especially after major rains. And many of us have experienced wet basements because of torrential rains and water hydraulic pressures from high groundwater levels. We were told by Lisa Coleman at the April 1 Board of Public Works meeting that this proposed drainage inlet will have no effect on groundwater levels; that this project will not alleviate water problems for any of us that may be created by high groundwater levels, including the properties where the inlet is to be located. She also said that occasional water pooling in the drainage inlet area may still occur, especially during torrential downpours.

Further, Lisa Coleman suggested to me on April 1, prior to the Board of Public Works meeting, that if myself and other neighbors do develop more severe water pooling problems, perhaps we could work together to lay drain tile through each other's properties and through the properties where the drainage inlet is to be installed to connect to this proposed inlet. I ask: Will the entire block and the City assist us in paying for that expense? Will our neighbors where the inlet is installed allow us to cross their properties to that inlet?

As for determining who should be included in this special assessment, I don't think it was fully investigated. The March 20 letter from City Engineering stated "this determination is based on a field walk of the area and City contours from aerial flights." Lisa Coleman told me she did not walk all properties in this block. If all the properties were walked, I think it would show that many of us should be excluded from this assessment because we do not drain into the problem area where the drainage inlet is proposed.

Because all of us on the block, with the exception of two properties, 501 Algoma St. and 2838 Hoard St., are being asked to help fund this improvement -- an improvement that only helps properties on the north end of the block -- I feel more investigation should be done to find solutions for any and all water problems the entire block may be experiencing.

In closing, I am not opposed to the project itself if the City wants to assist those properties at the north end of the block. However, I don't feel I add to their water problems and I should not be included in the assessment to help pay for it. But, if this project is approved by the Madison Common Council, I respectfully ask:

1. That a more thorough investigation be done to include other possible remedies, i.e., adding fill dirt to the problem low areas. If the low spot were filled in, it would no longer be an "enclosed depression" as stated in the March 20 City Engineering letter. Perhaps if it were no longer enclosed, rain runoff could be more feasibly directed to the street gutters.
2. If my property is not excluded from this assessment, then no properties be excluded; all properties in this block should be assessed and help pay for this drainage inlet as it is supposedly for the better good of the entire block.
3. That easements be added to property descriptions of those properties where the inlet is located allowing the rest of the block's property owners to access this inlet via their properties if we so request to alleviate water drainage problems in our yards.

I thank you for your consideration and your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Emery