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Sent: Thursday, August 4, 2022 4:17 PM
To: Heiser-Ertel, Lauren <LHeiser-Ertel@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Re: 8/8 Plan Commission Agenda

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Please forward the comments appended below to all plan commission members regarding August 8 agenda item 2, legistar number 72885.

Having lived in the Vilas neighborhood for 45 years, and the greenbush neighborhood for 5 years, I thought a little historical perspective might be of interest in this discussion.

The Vilas neighborhood portion that is west of Randall Avenue has hardly changed in the past 100 years. It is mostly single family, owner occupied, lower density housing, walkable and bikeable to the downtown and the University. Previous generations of homeowners, realizing what a special spot this is, have worked hard to keep the integrity and character of this wonderful place to live, for themselves and for future occupants. Portions of the Greenbush neighborhood between Park Street and Randall have not fared as well. In the 1970's zoning was changed to allow houses to become rental properties. It was only a few short years until many family owned houses were converted to rentals and multi unit rentals. Student rentals became dominant and families sold their homes to landlords and moved out in droves. While population density increased, there were fewer families, more transient residents, the neighborhood school closed, along with Park Street businesses including a grocery, a restaurant and a drug store. In recent years efforts to restore some of these rental properties back to single family ownership have turned things around a bit. When this 1970's zoning change occurred, I don't think the intent was to chase out the owner occupants, but that in fact was the result. My family is one that chose to leave the 100 block of Erin St.

Many have realized that neighborhoods, where the owners occupy the housing, are better maintained, and neighborhood cohesiveness improves. They are places that people want to live their lives. A neighborhood stays intact when the edges of the neighborhood are protected. This concept is in fact the reason the VNA was started. The proposed change does in fact impact the edges of our neighborhood close to the bus routes. We really need to be careful of any decisions that make the edges of the district less desired by potential homebuyers.

It should also be noted that most Madisonians create a large portion of their family wealth through home ownership. To me, the only way that this aspect of wealth accumulation happens, is by creating communities with more owners and fewer renters. It seems the proposed changes may have the opposite effect. We should be finding ways similar to the proposed Thorstad area project, to get people into affordable owner occupied housing. The city needs to carefully consider the possible negative effects of the seemingly well intentioned proposal being considered.

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