

Pien, Janet

From: william.bremer@dot.gov
Sent: Thursday, November 19, 2009 8:45 AM
To: farmerjohns@gmail.com
Cc: Pien, Janet; Phillips, Rob
Subject: RE: Femrite & Marsh Road Board of Public Works Hearing on 11/18

Mr. Johns, I did receive your email, which used my work email address. Unfortunately I was not in my office yesterday afternoon so I did not receive it prior to the BPW hearing last night. I am forwarding your email to Janet Pien for entry into the hearing record, as I indicated I would do last night.

Bill Bremer
Chairman
City of Madison Board of Public Works

From: Michael Johns [mailto:farmerjohns@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 18, 2009 1:57 PM
To: district6@cityofmadison.com
Cc: Bremer, William (FHWA); douglasduren@sbcglobal.net
Subject: Fwd: Tonight Board of Public Works

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Michael Johns** <farmerjohns@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Nov 18, 2009 at 12:56 PM
Subject: Tonight Board of Public Works
To: mayor@cityofmadison.com

11/18/09

Dear Mayor Cieslewicz,

I am asking that you support and protect, in the short term, current urban agriculture. We, my wife and myself, own and operate an ongoing established farming business that exists today within the city. Unless something is done to change the current ordinance regarding the deferral of special assessments on land used for agriculture, there will be no urban farming in Madison.

I am writing you with the hope that you may support two efforts:

- 1) The effort of both my wife, Terry Cohn, and myself to have the "Femrite Drive and Marsh Road Special Assessments" decision before the Board of Public Works **tonight**, postponed, deferred or referred, if necessary, in order that Alder Rummel, who has offered to be a sponsor, can move to amend City General Ordinance **4.081 DEFERRED ASSESSMENTS**

We are now facing a new **\$52,540 special assessment** for a **Public Works Project (ID 53B0462)** on Femrite Drive and Marsh Road

2) The effort of **Alder Rummel to amend the above mentioned ordinance** to allow the deferral of **special assessments** for property used for agriculture, which lies within the major industrial development areas of the City, and is **less than 10 acres in size**.

The current ordinance is attached and it reads “ten acres in size or larger. Our property is just shy of five acres. I have suggested adding something to the effect”??two, three, four acres or larger, and has been used for agriculture for the five years prior to the levy of the special assessment

We and others in the neighborhood have farmed this parcel since the 1860’s.

We are an example of the few urban farmers within the City, that farm under current zoning regulations. We have been serving the local restaurant community, and individuals under the name of “Sow Little Farm” for the last eight years. We have paid special assessments on our property exceeding \$30,000. By an acreage change in the above ordinance, we would receive the temporary relief we need to continue farming for some time to come. The current ordinance grants 10 years deferral on assessments, and then allows 15 years of payments made in installments.

My wife and I are both 59 years old. We have owned this property since 1991 when the most of area was used for agricultural purposes. When we purchased the land, there was a possibility of a landfill at the current DATCAP site. At various times, Pottinger, Livingston, and Graham, have been involved in farming on our property. They all had farmed their own land in the area as well.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent matter. I believe it is quite important to any urban agricultural initiatives.

Cordially,

Michael Johns