

Barbara Fant

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December 15, 2011

James Madison Park Surplus Property Disposal Committee
David Wallner, Chair
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Room 312
Madison, WI 53701

Dear Mr. Wallner and Members of the Committee:

In preparation for your meeting on December 15, 2011, we would like to elaborate upon our proposed use of and public access to the Collins House at 704 East Gorham Street. As stated in our original proposal, the Collins House will be the owner-occupied residence of the Fant/Gallo family, and we will undertake its environmentally responsible and historically correct rehabilitation with the same sensitivity and attention to detail seen in Mrs. Fant's previous award-winning restorations. (Color photographs on file.) We look forward to the City's placing a conservation easement on the property as noted in its Request for Proposals.

To ensure that the public is able to appreciate and enjoy this special house and its unique setting in James Madison Park, we intend to host a number of events. These will include:

- One to two facilitated open houses a year in conjunction with those hosted by Joe Lusson and Aleen Tierney at the Worden House at 640 East Gorham Street, and, we hope, with the owners of 646 East Gorham. Jason Tish, Executive Director of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation, has committed to work with us to create a dynamic presentation of the Collins House's historical and architectural significance.
- Guided tours by appointment for those, including tourists and groups, who would otherwise be unable to visit the house.
- Upon request, we will invite civic and neighborhood groups, including the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association, to use the first floor for meetings, receptions and benefits.
- Mark and Delia Gallo intend to operate a "Farm to Fork" catering business by reestablishing a commercial kitchen in the basement. It will emphasize local and sustainable ingredients, many of them grown by the couple on nearby land. They also intend to sponsor classes and workshops for children, young adults and adults to provide hands-on instruction in the entire process of producing delicious and value-added food, from growing strategies to culinary techniques. These could conclude with participants sitting down to enjoy their prepared meals together. This will require a conditional use permit but not a change in zoning.

While compliance with building code will be an important issue for any public access, we are working with Charles J. Quagliana, AIA, NCARB, an expert in historic rehabilitation, to determine what alterations will be necessary to make the Collins House accessible to the public in compliance with the building code. As stated in our original proposal, we are committed to making the first floor, including the first floor lavatory, wheelchair accessible.

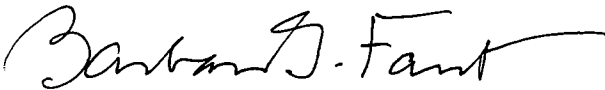
Lastly, we agree with the July 22, 2011, appraisal prepared by Quinn McWilliams of the Scott Appraisal Company. At the end of his discussion of highest and best use and of land analysis, he concludes, **"The sheer volume of sales of buildings for owner occupancy seems to dictate that the best use of the subject is owner occupancy, albeit with refurbishing necessary."** (Page 27. Emphasis the author's, with specific reference to the Leitch House, now operated as the Livingston Inn, within 500 feet of the Collins House.)

Mr. McWilliams' finding supports the January 12, 2005, appraisal of Andrew Kessenich and Bruce Perchik of the D. L. Evans Company, Inc., commissioned by the city specifically to analyze the market value of a single family residence in comparison with Bed & Breakfast, Rooming House, Fraternity / Sorority and Professional Office use of the property. It concluded that "the Highest and Best Use of the subject property is as a single family residence," with a market value twice that of a Bed & Breakfast. (Letter of January 31, 2005, page 2. Report, page 43 and passim.)

We hope you agree that our proposal for the Collins House as a single-family residence, with Barbara Fant's extensive resume of historic property restoration and our firm belief in and commitment to significant public access and education, will best insure the protection, preservation and appreciation of this beautiful landmark in James Madison Park.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Barbara G. Fant



Cordelia J. Gallo



Mark T. Gallo