

## AGENDA # 5

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION      **PRESENTED:** February 5, 2014

TITLE:    2046/2050 East Johnson Street – Rezoning  
            from NMX to PD(GDP-SIP) for Occupy  
            Madison, Inc.’s “Tiny Houses.” 12<sup>th</sup> Ald.  
            Dist. (32965)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

DATED: February 5, 2014

**ID NUMBER:**

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Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, Melissa Huggins, Cliff Goodhart, John Harrington, Richard Slayton and Lauren Cnare.

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of February 5, 2014, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a rezoning from NMX to PD(GDP-SIP) for Occupy Madison, Inc.’s “Tiny Houses” located at 2046/2050 East Johnson Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Brenda Konkel and Edward Kuharski. Appearing and speaking in opposition were Morgan Aten, Erin Sommerfeld and Evan Weir. Registered in opposition but not wishing to speak was Katie Weir. Konkel gave some context to the site. The four uses for the site include a workshop for building the little houses, remodel the bathrooms and add showers before the fourth house is installed (then it becomes a campground and require restrooms), a small retail shop for “goods,” and a greenhouse to grow some food. She noted that the site is capped for environmental reasons so boxed raised gardens would be used. They have two parking spots. The electric will be very much like at a campground where one plus in. The houses are equipped with solar so they can run basic appliances, as well as a propane heater. There is a water system but no plumbing. Technically the tiny houses are legally able to park on City streets but that is not the intent; they have to be moved every 24 hours in the winter and every 48 hours in the summer, which is why they are so desperately seeking a plot of land for that purpose. They are having a difficult time finding a non-profit or church willing to host these tiny houses because of liability insurance reasons. Lighting on the houses and the building will be dark sky compliant. Most of the volunteers ride their bicycles or take the bus, which will cut down drastically on the amount of automobiles coming to the site.

Evan Weir spoke in opposition. Based on two presentations he has attended by Occupy Madison, none of these trailers will have hard pipes sanitary or water connections; this intersection floods multiple times per year and he is concerned with potential sanitary issues. He is also concerned about conflicted uses, the density of these trailers adjacent to a proposed manufacturing facility. He questioned if a proper code analysis has been done. The neighborhood has not been presented with any environmental information about the site, which was an auto shop and gas station before that. He doesn’t feel that there has been enough thought to this site for this type of development. When he bought his home nearby he was not looking to live near a trailer park.

Erin Sommerfeld spoke in opposition stating she doesn't want to feel unsafe in her neighborhood. She doesn't think the plan is very well thought-out and one of the reasons she wanted to live where she does is because of the neighborhood. The space allotted for the trailers is too small for the number of people that would be living there. She has concerns with sanitary issues, noise, garbage and safety.

Morgan Aten spoke in opposition. This feels unprecedented as a mix of housing, manufacturing and retail in the area. There are limited resources to deal with housing problems in Madison and she feels this project takes those resources away from projects that do make sense. There are safety concerns with their "sitting circle," having that many people living and working on tiny houses on such a small lot; if they encroach onto the sidewalk at all they'll be hit by a bicycle as bikes come very fast down the sidewalk. She stated that when they have company and gather they do so in their backyard, not their front yard, and they have the same expectations of their neighbors. Having 30-40 people in the front of this potential project is rude, it's not conducive to the privacy of nearby residents, nor is it courteous to the neighborhood. Furthermore they had a neighborhood meeting about this project, and a police captain who was in attendance told them the Police Department opposes this project as it will create an increased need for law enforcement services in this neighborhood. There are no allowances for the increase in parking that will occur. The Alder has not taken a stand on this project. There is no precedent for a "campground" on less than 1/3 of an acre in a residential neighborhood.

The Secretary explained that the project is before the Commission because it is a PD and under the current code you have to explain why it couldn't be done under the conventional zoning district and start the conversation as far as what you are doing for design to meet the PD standards.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Can you take them off the wheels?
  - Then we would have to comply with building codes, plumbing codes, electrical codes. And they would need foundations.
- Why is the entrance drive so wide?
  - It's existing. We're waiting for the file from the DNR to see what we can and can't do.
- Traffic Engineering may ask you to alter or close curb cut(s).

**ACTION:**

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.