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Erin O'Brien
Joseph Hennessy
2221 Lake Point Dr.
Madison, WI 53713

January 19, 2016

Madison Common Council
January 19, 2016 meeting
Opposition to item 5, rezoning and demolition at 1917 Lake Point Dr.

Members of Madison Common Council,

We appear in opposition to the approval of Creating Section 28.022-00205 of the Madison General Ordinances to change the zoning of property located at 1917 Lake Point Drive, 14th Aldermanic District, from TR-V1 (Traditional Residential - Varied 1) District to TR-U1 (Traditional Residential - Urban 1) District.

The rezoning requested for this parcel is part of a much larger project in the Broadway-Simpson corridor of the Waunona Way Planning District. While conditional use permits were approved for the companion project at 2230 W. Broadway at the January 11 Planning Commission meeting, neighboring property owners have prepared an appeal to that decision, which will be submitted to the Secretary of the Plan Commission tomorrow, January 20, 2016.

For those of you not familiar with our neighborhood, we are talking about Simpson Street, a neighborhood that only recently recovered from near collapse due to poor land use planning that resulted in an incapacitating concentration of poverty with minimal access to transit and scant resources in the neighborhood. Though the neighborhood is now stable, these challenges persist and are the grounds for the neighborhood's opposition to both portions of this project.

Because the two projects are part of a single package they should not be heard nor decided separately. We request that you delay your decision on this agenda item tonight so it can be considered with the other half of this project on appeal.

The demolition in question tonight includes an apartment building (1917 Lake Point Dr.) that houses between one-half and one-third of the Bridge Lake Point Waunona Neighborhood Center on its ground floor. The remainder of space used by the neighborhood center is in a separate building at 1910 Lake Point Dr.

The BLP-W Center is operated by the Vera Court Neighborhood Center, with a part-time center director who is not a neighborhood resident and a board of directors that includes no residents of the Bridge-Lake Point Waunona Neighborhood. Further, the largest user of the center is Vera Court's Latino Academy Program- a respected and successful program, but one that serves a city wide audience. This is germane to this discussion because their needs for additional space may be part of what is driving this proposal. The Latino Academy should neither be considered a BLP-W program nor should the BLP-W neighborhood center be considered the only potential home for these programs.

The plans to demolish and relocate the BLP-W neighborhood center were decided behind closed doors between the developer of this project, city staff, and BLP-W leadership. Residents were not advised of the inclusion of the inclusion of space for a relocated neighborhood center until October 1, 2015 (three months after the decision was made). We initiated an open records request December 12, 2015 to try to fully understand the trajectory of this dialogue, but records have yet to be furnished- it is now 38 days later, eight days after the planning commission meeting. Because this process has been driven exclusively by the developers' timeline to submit

an application to WHEDA for funding, at no point were neighborhood residents permitted a broad discussion about potential alternatives within the project. By contrast, one community meeting has already been held and a second is scheduled regarding alternatives for relocation of community gardens on the west side.

While the use of \$1.5 - \$1.7 million of tax incremental financing for the project is alluring to some, there are legal questions regarding the use of TIF funding for construction of a civic building. Use of those funds is also contingent on amendment to our TIF Project Plan, and the proceedings for that have yet to be initiated. The safety and appropriateness of the proposed location of the new center (on a busy road between a shift bar (Antler's Tavern) and a gas station) is questioned or opposed by a large number of neighborhood residents from throughout the BLP-W community (see petition provided to you). There is an active dialogue on our listserv asking why they didn't consider switching the plans for the two parcels. The answer is because they were not open to a discussion of alternatives.

Further, both re-zoning the lots at 1917 Lake Point to residential (from mixed use) and using 2230 for non-commercial purposes are actions contrary to neighborhood's TIF redevelopment project plan and diminish the amount of space available for much-needed commercial amenities. As it was throughout the lowest of the times during the 1990s, this neighborhood remains a resource-limited, transportation-limited island, yet no action has been taken by the city to use TIF funding to ameliorate those deficiencies. The neighborhood's Walk Score is 41- which classifies it as "car dependent- most errands require a car."¹

Although the planning commission's recommendation is that the demolition permit for the subject site be conditioned on the existing neighborhood center being relocated prior to issuance, we ask the Common Council to defer its decision both rezoning and requested demolition at 1917 Lake Point Drive until it has a chance to consider both this project and the appeal of the 2230 W Broadway project as part of a single project.

Thank you for your consideration.

¹ www.walkscore.com; the Walk Score algorithm awards points based on the distance to the closest amenity in each category. If the closest amenity in a category is within .25 miles (or .4 km), we assign the maximum number of points. The number of points declines as the distance approaches 1 mile (or 1.6 km)—no points are awarded for amenities farther than 1 mile. Each category is weighted equally and the points are summed and normalized to yield a score from 0–100. The number of nearby amenities is the leading predictor of whether people walk. Relevant amenities include "businesses, parks, theaters, schools and other common destinations."