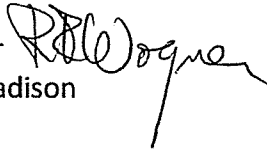


Date: August 22, 2016

To: Madison Landmarks Commission

From: R. Richard Wagner  
739 Jenifer St., Madison



Re: Vogel House lake access

I ask the indulgence of the members of the Landmarks Commission for this appearance as my general rule as chair of another city commission is not to speak before other commissions except on business of the commission I chair. However, these circumstances present a unique historical situation.

I believe I am the most senior resident on the 700 block of Jenifer Street, not the oldest, but the longest residing having been there since 1974. As such I am a keeper of some of its oral tradition, part of its history. Some was passed down to me by prior residents like Bob Kubly on the block in the 1950s and Carol Ann Crabs on the block in the late 1960s. In this instance Carol Ann was a key source since she knew my neighbor Sophie a descendant of the original mid-block families. And Carol Ann visited often and cared for in her latter days Mrs. Vogel. She sold some of the Vogel items in our neighborhood block sale after Mrs. Vogel's passing.

Having consulted the Sanborn insurance maps for my own property I know the older lakeside houses often had various outbuildings and sheds on the property behind the street facades down to the lake. These are almost all missing today from the fabric of the block. One of the last to go was the Vogel boathouse. I myself was in the Vogel boathouse structure before it was gone. It was an old cobbled together hodge-podge structure with a couple rooms on a floor above the boat storage level. The oral tradition of the block was that Mr. Vogel used to hang out there with card playing buddies as part of his social life. Another tradition had rum running across the lake from the boathouse itself. Obviously this was not in the tradition of running booze across U.S. borders, but in the prohibition era even local distribution of spirits might be better concealed on night trips over the largely unpatrolled lake surface. This would have been an era when many more boathouses existed around the lakeshore.

All of this is to say, in the history of the Vogel House its connection to the lake was an important part of the social past of the property's history. While the boathouse itself is gone the lakeshore is not. Some link such as an easement for access, as recommended I understand by the neighborhood association would seem appropriate. The Elks Club are to be commended for a willingness to sell the house so it can be preserved. I hope the city can find the correct way to permit a division but respect the fabric of history as well.