



Office of the Common Council

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Attorney Michael Christopher
DeWitt Ross & Stevens, SC
2 E. Mifflin Street
Madison, WI 53703

Thomas Keller
Keller Development, LLC
448 W. Washington Avenue
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Michael and Tom:

Thank you for providing me with an "advance copy" of the letter of intent regarding a demolition permit for 1902 Tennyson Lane. I have also received a copy of your application from City staff. My comments here are based on the discussions we've had on the site, the neighborhood meeting, my conversations with staff, and my reading of your application.

As you know, I am interested in ways to grow small businesses and bring jobs and economic activity to the Northside. I was initially optimistic that this project could help do that. However, I have quite a few concerns. I think it is clear to all involved that the existing buildings are not worth saving. Thus, the decision centers on the proposed use of the site. First and foremost, I am surprised that your application does not include more detail on the proposed future use of the land. As you know, that is an important part of the Plan Commission's decision-making process. I hope to see much more detail as an amendment to your application in the near future. Once I do, I will be able to comment more specifically. For now, let me outline the concerns I have.

1. Consistency with Comprehensive and Neighborhood Plans: The City's Comprehensive Plan lists this site as low-density residential, and the existing neighborhood plan, which is in the process of being updated, highlights this site in particular as having a land use and zoning inconsistent with surrounding use and suggests low- to medium-density residential use. This project is obviously inconsistent with both plans, even though it is consistent with current zoning.
2. Private streets and lack of connectivity: To date, the proposal has been to use private streets without curb, gutter and sidewalk in this project. The most recent drawing I have (received before you filed the application, and not included therein) shows connections to City streets at Eliot Lane and Kipling Drive. I am concerned about the lack of curb and gutter because of the implications for runoff and erosion when cars park along these streets (as they inevitably will). I am concerned about the lack of sidewalks and the safety hazard that poses, especially

with an elementary school so close. However, I am even more concerned with the lack of connectivity to any potential development to the north. We all know that the property immediately to the north of these parcels has a high potential for development and is suggested to be low- to medium-density residential. It seems shortsighted to not prepare for a public street connection from the Whitetail Ridge Neighborhood south to the Berkley Oaks Neighborhood.

3. Property access: As mentioned above, the proposal is currently to access this property via driveways on Tennyson Lane at Eliot Lane and Kipling Drive and not to have access off of Packers Avenue. The neighborhood, Traffic Engineering and I all agree that the property really needs access via Packers Avenue. There is less agreement about the access across from Eliot Lane – the neighborhood is concerned about this intersection, but it may be key in maintaining connectivity to the north. The question of where to put the entrances to this property hinge on what is decided about connectivity and including public streets.
4. Precedent: Although the proposed use is allowable under current zoning, I am concerned about the precedent set by allowing a large number of commercial bungalows in the middle of what is already on the southern side, and will most likely be on the northern side, a low- to medium-density residential neighborhood.
5. Proximity to School: The presence of Lakeview Elementary adjacent to this site makes it especially important to consider how the proposed land use will affect pedestrian traffic and whether or not this land use presents a hazard to young children. The sidewalk along Tennyson is a primary pedestrian route for students. I am concerned about students cutting through the property to get to school and walking along private streets with no sidewalks. The question has also been raised whether or not this is an appropriate land use next to a school.
6. Preserving existing trees: I very much appreciate the efforts to preserve the existing tree line along Tennyson Lane. I would like to explore preserving the trees along the west side of the property and along Packers Avenue as well.
7. Aesthetics: The pictures provided of similar projects are, at best, uninspiring. I realize that the buildings in adjacent neighborhoods are not exactly architectural gems, but I would hope that this project could provide a little more variety and visual interest, something that doesn't immediately evoke the Malvina Reynolds song "Little Boxes."
8. Neighborhood concerns: I know that you have received a letter from the Berkley Oaks Neighborhood Association stating their opposition to the proposal and outlining their reasons. While I do not share all of their concerns, they must be discussed and addressed. I suggest that, at minimum, we meet with neighborhood leadership and possibly hold another public meeting.

Because of the neighborhood's opposition and my above-listed concerns, I cannot at this time support your application for a demolition permit at 1902 Tennyson Lane. I would be happy to discuss with you other options for moving forward and will certainly review whatever additional material you may submit regarding the proposed use to see if it alleviates my concerns.

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I am well aware that under existing zoning, you have many options for moving forward on the property at 3802 Packers Avenue, regardless of what happens at 1902 Tennyson Lane. I hope that as you move forward with both this application and your plans for the site as a whole, you will continue to work with me, City staff and the neighborhood to address our concerns. I would hope that we can find a solution that meets all of our needs.

Sincerely,



Satya Rhodes-Conway
Alder, District 12

cc: Ald. Michael Schumacher, District 18
Lydia Maurer, Berkley Oaks Neighborhood Association
Brad Murphy, Director, Planning Division
✓ Tim Parks, Planning Division
Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator
David Dryer, City Traffic Engineer
Northside Planning Council

