

Re: Letter

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Rebecca Absalon <rabsalon71@gmail.com>

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To: Alex Absalon;

On Wed, Feb 5, 2020 at 11:58 AM Rebecca Absalon <rabsalon71@gmail.com> wrote:

February 1, 2020

To the City of LaCrosse:

My name is Rebecca Absalon and my husband and I purchased 611 Ferry Street as our first home in 1998 when I was pregnant with our first child, Gabe. Steve and Sandy Roberge were already in residence across the street raising their four children. Tom and Kathy Feeny moved in shortly after the birth of our second child, Maya, in 2007.

We have always loved the Washburn neighborhood and have seen its potential even though it is a neighborhood that is frequently shamed and disregarded. Over the years, we have thought that part of the problem was the fact that there were many rentals that were owned by landlords who didn't live in the neighborhood and who didn't care who they rented to, thus resulting in criminal activity occurring in those rentals.

In 2016, Alex and I decided that we would purchase 512/514 Ferry Street as a rental investment property. Not only would this be a financial investment, but also a neighborhood investment, a chance to clean up the Washburn neighborhood ourselves.

Since 2016, we have purchased four other rental properties, all within a five block area of our home at 611 Ferry, and all within the Washburn neighborhood. We own and maintain these properties ourselves while working full time; Alex at Dahl Subaru and Rebecca running our restaurant by UWL. These properties' taxes add up to around \$20,000 per year and as we all know, they just went up.

My point is this - we are deeply invested emotionally and financially in the Washburn neighborhood. We also are opposed to the sewer project for the same reasons that Tom Feeny stated in his letter. The street does not flood often, and when it does, it is due to the clogging of the drain at 7th and Ferry. We also feel that one of the reasons that drain clogs is because the leaf collection in Washburn is very haphazard, sometimes coming long before the bulk of the leaves have fallen and never coming again, or long after they've been raked and piled and it's snowed, or they've blown away. Ferry Street is often forgotten when it comes to leaf and snow removal. All three of us have worked together to keep the area clean and nice.

I also feel that in a neighborhood that the city claims it is always trying to renovate and renew, the last thing it should do is penalize long time, tax paying homeowners who have invested so much effort and money already into the neighborhood on their own.

We were also the owners of 512/514 Ferry when they did the last sewer project which frequently left our tenants with no water or sewer facilities during that two month period, including disconnecting their sewer system on the Friday of Oktoberfest and leaving for the weekend, telling no one. We spent the entire Saturday trying to figure out why the tenants' toilets weren't working and the sewer was flooding the basement. After renting a very costly snake and running it all the way to the street finding nothing, we decided to contact the city to see if it was related to the construction that was going on. After finally reaching the on call person, (since it was Oktoberfest weekend, no one was available,) they located the contractor who had disconnected the sewer and gone up north for the weekend. He had to come back and backhoe the area that night at around 10 pm to reconnect everything. Meanwhile my tenants (two apartments) and their Oktoberfest guests had to use the porta-potties that were in the street for the construction workers. We had to then clean the sewage flooded basement and pay for an unnecessary snake rental. That project also cut down all of the boulevard trees, many of which were more than 100 years old.

My children learned to walk under our trees and learned to ride their bikes under the ones that are gone. And like those trees, my family has roots here. We are dug in. We are invested already, as are the other families in question.

In conclusion, we are the people you want in your neighborhood, and we feel that this project is taking advantage of our positions as homeowners and taxpayers. We should not be punished by trying to extract more from us for a project that is unnecessary. We have invested more than enough.

Thank you,



Rebecca and Alejandro Absalon