

August 2, 2018

Andrea Richmond, Chair
Judiciary and Administrative Committee
City of La Crosse
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Dear Ms. Richmond,

I am writing in support of John and Sangeetha Kelly's request to the City to move or demolish 2036 Cass Street.

My wife Susan and I sold 304 South 21st Street to the Kellys a few years ago. We bought it from Pat and Jerry Kellum, one of whom (Pat) had lived in the home for 41 years. We remodeled the home extensively and the Kellys continued on with extensive much-needed repairs to the garage. I believe the Kellys appreciate the home as much as we did.

Had we kept the home, we would be making the exact same request as the Kellys. The adjacent home is simply too close to 304. Allowing such close juxtaposition so many years ago was a mistake by the city planner of the time and the Kellys now have the money and desire to correct that mistake.

The Kelly house is a much beloved home in the Weigent-Hogan Historic District. Built in the English Cottage style with swooping roof line, yellow brick, arched windows on Cass Street, tile roof and clinging vines it is a romantic storybook house. Numerous times when I was mowing the lawn or raking leaves, passers-by would stop to tell me of their love for the house. And they were right!

The adjacent house is quite ordinary by comparison with a hastily attached garage that seems to have been an afterthought. It's removal or demolition would not be a loss to the neighborhood.

Patty Kellum had come up with a unique solution to the closeness of the two houses. With the apparent permission of a one-time owner of 2036, she built a brick patio between the two houses (but in the backyard of 2036) and used the patio as if it was her own space. That worked fine for a while but as 2036 changed owners over the years the arrangement created considerable tension between neighbors.

So I approve of the Kelly's proposal—with one caveat. The cleared lot should not be used to build an oversized garage. But if it is used to create a

greenspace backyard with grass, gardens and trees, perhaps enclosed by a well-designed fence, the value and livability of 304 will be markedly increased and the neighborhood enhanced. If the Kellys are willing to pay a PILOT fee to the city, it will be a win-win situation for all parties.

When we left 304 we moved only five blocks east so we still see the little cottage daily. We will be interested to see the outcome of the Kelly's request.

Good luck in your decision-making!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Halter', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mark Halter
2610 Cass Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Cc: Jason Gilman, City Planner
Tim Kabat, Mayor