

**From the desk of David E. Olson**

September 13, 2017

To: LaCrosse City Council

Re: Rezoning petition for Olson Family property at 225-227 & 231 21<sup>st</sup> St. No.

Dear City Council Member:

We would appreciate your consideration of a few points from the Tuesday September 5, 2017 City Plan Commission and J & A Committee meetings.

Our family has addressed all the concerns that the GENA neighbors and the City Planning Dept. raised in their initial opposition to our project. We met with Jason Gilman and went over the re-submittal of our TND-General plans and all other information requested by the City Planner in his letter to us of June 23, 2017. As a result the City Planner has reversed his original position and now recommends a conditioned approval of our rezoning request. Our family representative met with the GENA neighbors at an August meeting to go over concerns relative to lack of detail of plans in our initial rezoning submittal. Our family representative reported that she felt the meeting was positive and that we had addressed the neighbors overall concerns.

At the City Plan Commission meeting the GENA neighbors moved the goalposts and said "It's an issue of precedent, not plans." "We don't want any more multi-family development until (GENA) has a comprehensive plan." This is not consistent with what their survey report said, which specifically asked us for plans. It feels like we were asked for plans with the hope our design would be ugly, but when it became evident we wanted to build a legacy project with expensive aesthetic investments, a different reason had to be found to oppose us. Why the overwhelming support for the Wanders development right across the street from this property? Every concern the GENA neighbors raised about our rezoning request (density, size of the building on the lot, occupancy in the rental, etc.) were ones which should have been brought up when the Wanders project was being approved. It makes no sense to us to see the GENA neighbors to support the Wanders project (6 house demolition to build 3-story row-houses) which will dramatically change the appearance, density and character of the neighborhood while strongly opposing our proposal (1 rental house demolition to build a duplex) across the street.

Council Member Marshall said at the J & A meeting that he had looked at our other multi-family properties and felt our family did an excellent job with these rentals and said he wished all landlords would make the same effort to manage and take care of their properties

as our family does. What kind of message does the council send if being a good landlord and taking care of your properties doesn't warrant consideration of a chance to redevelop it someday?

We are happy to work with GENA neighbors to come up with a plan that fits into the character of the neighborhood. Nora Garland (GENA neighborhood co-chair) said GENA is open to working with our family on a different design in the future. We have invested a lot of time, effort and money towards this project. Before we commit any additional efforts and dollars we would like to be granted this TND-General rezoning. This is only the first step and we will have to come back through the entire rezoning process for TND-Specific zoning to be able to actually build. We have owned these properties since 1971 & 1994. To my knowledge no neighbors have ever had a problem or a complaint about our tenants. Our proposal marginally increases the density of the number of tenants on site. We have had that same density on one of the lots since 1981 without causing the neighborhood any kind of problem. It is our hope that a 47 year track record means something.

Some have asked for our project to be held up for a year or longer for GENA to develop a comprehensive plan. We are asking approval of our TND-General rezoning plan now to permit our family & GENA to work together on a design while a comprehensive plan is being worked on. This parallel track would show "good faith" on GENA's part to work with us. Our family has built 6 different multi-family quality buildings over the years and we are very knowledgeable on design and construction.

If this is not approved than how does one handle old houses that are reaching the end of their useful economic life?

In the momentum to approve the Wander's project no one brought up Item K.9 of the Building Design: Form, Scale, and Context for City of LaCrosse Multi-Family Housing Design Standards:

K.9 Multi-family buildings proposed for the Washburn Residential District, R-2 District, Traditional Neighborhood District, or that are in an R-3 to R-6 district that are on or across from any block that is currently made up of fifty (50) percent or more parcels that are zoned R1, shall not be more than fifteen (15) feet taller nor three (3) times larger in square footage than the nearest single-family residential dwellings
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The Wander's building being proposed is substantially over 15 feet taller and many multiples more than 3 times larger in square footage than our single story house. Will the Wander's project get a waiver from these standards? Is it right that our rezoning be denied if he gets a waiver of K.9 when these standards were enacted to protect properties like ours? The massive size of what is going across the street from us will unfairly adversely affect our

property if the council decides our lot should remain R-1. Who would ever build a brand new single-family house directly across from a three-story 12-plex sitting almost up to the sidewalks?

Finally, we would like to address one part of the City Planners report. In the final paragraph of his report he states that "The Planning Department would also recommend conditioning this approval on the reduction of bedrooms to 4 maximum per unit." We would request this condition be deleted from any approval of our rezoning request. We view this development as a legacy project and a final opportunity to leave a mark in the community before my career as a landlord is over (I'm 69). To justify the quality and expensive features which this project will include we need to generate a certain amount of income back in rent. To tie our hands in the planning stage of this development and arbitrarily reduce the income stream by limiting the number of bedrooms in the units, makes it very hard, if not impossible for this project to cash flow.

We would deeply appreciate your vote and support to approve our rezoning petition.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to call us at 608 782-0808.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

David E. Olson & Family

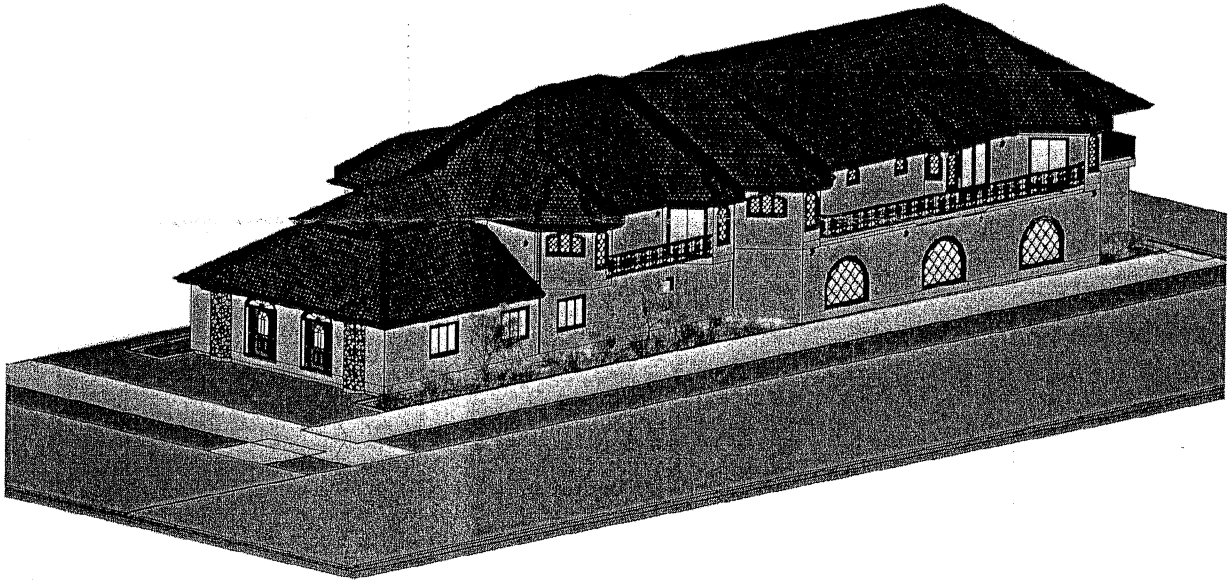
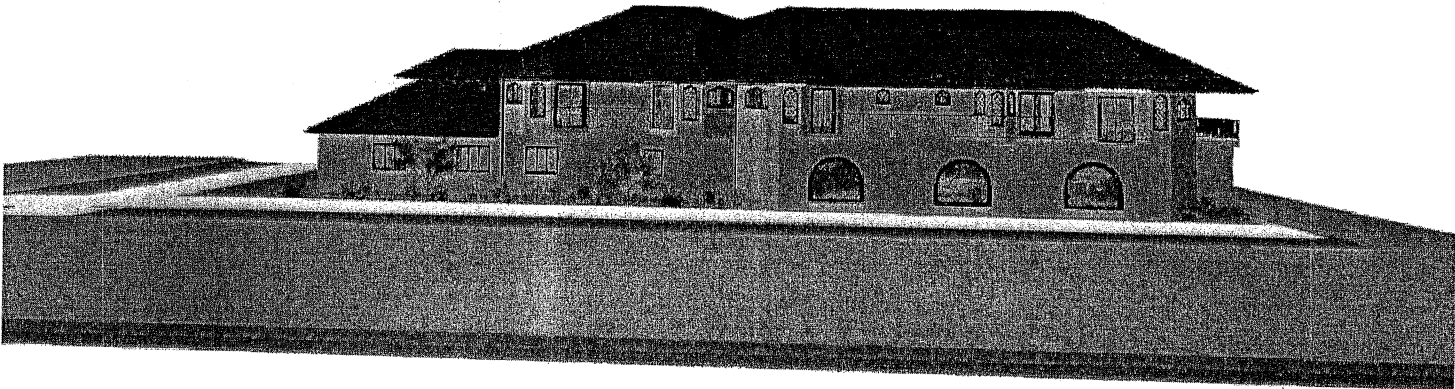
Attachments:

Cc: Mayor Kabat

City Planning Department Director: Jason Gilman

City Planning Department Senior Planner Tim Acklin

DAVID & ELAINE OLSON – 229-231 N 21<sup>st</sup> St Proposed Project



8/18/2017

Google Maps

PROPOSED 229-231 N <sup>Google Maps</sup> 21<sup>ST</sup> ST.  
RELATIVE SCALE



Imagery ©2017 G

Originally our intent was to design something which matched in style to Mr. Wanders project, however, since Mr. Wanders has indicated publicly that Three Sixty "stands alone", we respect his wishes and offer a 100% original design, very distinct and unique from the townhouses that will be facing our property. We hope the City agrees that our parcel is ideal for a transitional-scale property such as the duplex we have designed.

We have received some very enthusiastic supportive feedback from neighbors on the design we have developed, and look forward to incorporating the neighbors in making several design decisions leading into the TND-specific stage of rezoning later down the road.

