

From : The Hambrooks (home owner)
To : City of Milwaukee ZND/Common Council
Re : Solar Installation 2015 N Lake Dr. (Historic Water Tower South Neighborhood)

- We are sorry we cannot attend any of the three meetings thus far in person, but we are both physicians whose schedules are set several weeks in advance and we are not the type of physicians who will reschedule patients/procedures already arranged to satisfy our personal needs. If anyone would like to discuss any of this at a time that is mutually convenient, we are happy to.
- Our understanding in watching the two HPC meeting videos is that the city attorney told the committee they could not “significantly” alter our planned installation due to State Solar Rights so it is unclear to me why this is even an issue. (Wis. Stat. § 66.0401, local governments -- counties, towns, cities and villages - - may not place any restriction on the installation or use of solar or wind energy systems unless the restriction: 1) serves to preserve or protect public health or safety 2) does not significantly increase system cost or efficiency 3) allows for an alternative system of comparable cost and efficiency)
- The same week our installation was denied our Mayor was holding a press conference to encourage solar installations. (By Isiah Holmes, Wisconsin Examiner - Feb 6th, 2024 10:11 am
“Current and former elected officials joined residents, workers union members and climate organizers in Milwaukee County on Friday (2/2/24) to raise awareness about new pathways now open to homeowners to access clean and renewable energy. Mayor Cavalier Johnson joined County Executive David Crowley, former Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, Green Homeowners United (GHU) union worker Warren Kirby, and others to announce new opportunities for green policies to take root in Milwaukee.”
- The permanent staff of the Historic Preservation office recommended approving the system as is.
- The denial was a repetitive 3-3 tie vote on the HPC with the only justification against it that solar systems should not be visible from the “public right of way” in historic district. All solar systems in these neighborhoods are visible from some public right of way so this thinking would prevent solar installation in all historic districts. No part of this system is viewable from the main elevation of the home on Lake Dr. which should be the focus of historic preservation. The system will sit 3-6 inches off the roof and be uniform dark color similar to the asphalt shingles. All that is hidden from view by this system is asphalt shingles.

Obviously, we as a family are in favor of historic preservation or we would not have bought a large old home in a historic district and spent 15 years investing several hundred thousand dollars taking care of the deferred maintenance. Historic preservation is a balance of competing interests. Our design, as supported by the HPC permanent staff, is the correct balance of preserving the character of the historic district while allowing solar power generation which is critical to our community’s future. We can perhaps see why the three senior members of the HPC would not have a similar views on the balance of this new technology but they should not be allowed to block the solar power generation for Milwaukee’s historic districts. In addition, for future COA applicants they should not be allowed to hold up the process for three months adding significant additional costs to these projects.

Sincerely,
John, Sarah, Elizabeth, Mary, Matthew and Laura Hambrook