

March 21st, 2001

Suzanne Schicantek
2822 West Burnham Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53215-2212

Grant F. Langley
City Attorney
200 East Wells Street, Suite 800
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202-3551

RE: C.I. File No: 01-S-15

Dear Mr. Langley,

On March 20th, I received your letter, dated March 5th, 2001. As there is obvious disagreement, and I am honest and sincere in the statements that I already submitted, I respectfully request a hearing on this matter.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Suzanne Schicantek", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Suzanne Schicantek

CITY OF MILWAUKEE

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RONALD D. LEONHARDT
CITY CLERK

Suzanne Schicantek
2822 West Burnham Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53215-2212

October 24th, 2000

City of Milwaukee
City Clerk
ATTN: Claims
200 E. Wells St.
Room 205
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202-3567

It has been extremely difficult for me to write this letter, even though time has been passing since this has occurred. I have felt extremely violated and devastated. My yard and its natural beauty and my collection of heirloom plants has been a source of great comfort and pride to me. I feel especially proud to have been able to own my own home in which to raise my four children, as a divorced mother. Many of the trees and plants that we have been growing do have great sentimental value.

When I found a 'weed destruction notice' dated 9-8-00, laying in my yard, I told my son to expect to be helping me over the weekend, which he took very seriously, and did. In spite of frequent rain, we were able to pull out whatever weeds there were, and other questionable plants, over nine inches tall. Due to the rain, and the fact that I don't have my own car to haul them away, the weeds were piled in the driveway, until we could do something more appropriate with them.

We bought a flat of pansies, planted half of them along the front sidewalk, the other half were on the front porch.

Work gloves, tools were on the front porch, in plain view.

The requested work was done, and there was evidence that we had done it, and were continuing to plant the flowers in lieu of weeds, when I left for work the morning of the 12th.

When I returned home from work, my yard was so hacked up, it looked like someone had clear cut it. There were places in the front yard that even the soil itself had been cut! My yard was literally bare!

There had been a pine tree in the front yard that my son had planted as a fingerling ten years earlier. It had a ring of daisies growing around it. This was cut off, except for the bottom several inches, and one branch. The ground cover in my front yard had been violets, Wisconsin's state flower. This time of year, they were heart-shaped dark green leaves, 2-4 inches tall. They were cut to 1/2 inch, resulting in a large area of occasional little green stems. The daisy plants were all cut down, as were the irises. I had planted a variegated ground cover in one corner of the yard, and that was also cut off.

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CITY OF MILWAUKEE
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Next to my house, in an enclosed area between the driveway and the foundation, I had several years plantings of Hollyhocks that I had collected from my late grandmother's house and the Farmers' Market, which were also completely cut off. The sign that they were Hollyhocks and how to care for them was still in the ground, were they had been planted.

In my back yard, there are areas of intense shade, in which I had worked for several years to fill with ostrich ferns. These look like tall feathers, coming out of a central clump. These were also completely cut off. Next to those were Forget-me-nots, which were a heritage gift from my great-grandmother's garden., which also were cut off.

Even what had been done, was done unprofessionally. There was litter left, the Polaroid film cartridge laying in the driveway. Some of the piles of stuff that they had cut were laying around , some of the stuff that we had pulled out had been removed. The job was not even completed as far as to removing what they had cut.

It was very hard to believe that what had been done was actually anybody's intention, it looked much more like malicious vandalism. The order refers to weeds over nine inches tall, even if the people doing this were not familiar with pine trees, ferns, hollyhocks and irises, the variegated ground cover and violets were no taller than four inches. The pansies had flowers on them, which were laying wilting on the ground when I got home !

The following day, I called the City of Milwaukee Sanitation Division and spoke with Nancy Moore. She provided the name of the contractor who had been hired, and recommended that I contact him to try to remedy the damage done. My hope was that at least if it were a reputable landscape service, which perhaps had hired some new, inexperienced help, they could replant something to at least cover the ground, or sod, or some type of mulch. They could offer compensation or at minimal an apology and advice.

Unfortunately, when I did speak on the phone with a gentleman who identified himself as the owner of the service, I got various versions of whether he was there himself or not, basically he defended the work as 'per contract', and got belligerent with me. He did state that photographs had been taken and submitted for payment as proof of work done. At the conclusion of our conversation, I was under the impression that he would come to my property himself, and either re-state that his company had done the work as he wanted it done, or try to make the situation better. I made sure to remind him of my name, address and phone number.

I was extremely upset by what had happened, but was optimistic after talking with Ms. Moore several times. I was willing to be co-operative with the contractors, however, they never did make any attempt to contact me again.

A friend of mine has taken photos with a digital camera of various areas that had been damaged. Although obviously a dollar amount cannot compensate for the sentimental value of heritage plants, I have tried to find prices of similar plants available commercially.

I have no idea how much the contractors were paid for what they did, however, purely from the impartial perspective of a taxpayer, I feel they did not deserve to be paid. As a concerned citizen, I feared for other people whose yards might be similarly devastated.

Itemization:

I have been unable to find replacements for all the plants, or the prices, the ones I have listed were from a catalog, "Wayside Gardens", the ones indicated * are available from them, with total shipping charges being \$12.75.

*Tree - Colorado Blue Spruce \$45.00 ~ \$45.00

*Irises 12- @ \$47.95 a Dozen ~ \$47.95

Pansies

*Hollyhocks 9 @ (3@10.95 x 3 = \$32.85) ~ \$43.80

*Ostrich fern 18 @ [6-\$34.00 + 12-\$65.00) ~ \$99.00

*Forget-me-nots 6 @ \$34.00 ~ \$34.00

Daisies 8

Violets 36

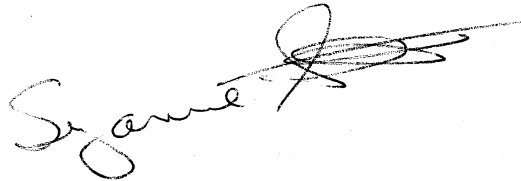
*Ground cover (Pachysandra 'Silveredge')6 @ (\$8.95 dozen = \$5.00) ~ \$5.00

I have used the prices from plants as similar to the ones I had as possible. The Colorado Blue Spruce in the catalog is substantially smaller than the one cut off. I realize that some of the plants may 'come back'. I have not tried to pad the expenses, and have not claimed labor costs.

I feel that a claim for \$275 is modest, but acceptable to me.

My contact information:

Suzanne Schicantek
2822 W. Burnham Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53215
414-647-2090





The yard had been carpeted with violet leaves,
there were not any bare spots. It was lush, green.
Pine tree was front, left in this view.

(view my front sidewalk, → west)



front, right variegated pachysandra.

(View driveway → to east)



The pansys that I had not yet planted were sitting on the front porch. I had planted flowering plants along the front sidewalk - which were cut to 1".



Near the sidewalk - Flowering pansys had been -
in the corner, irisis and in the middle - back
my son's tree.



A shady corner in my backyard - I had several dozen ostrich ferns growing here 2"-3" tall. Along the sidewalk were pale blue forget-me-nots



Unprofessional workmanlike - piles of debris were left - some was taken, some not. Some that I had left were taken & some not



Left in the middle of my drive way



Early Spring
This photo was taken in 1996 - the small
pine tree in middle of the yard - a
Colorado Blue Spruce - was skinned off
in Sept 2000 (it was then more than
twice the size as in this photo.)

2822 W. Burnham
Milw. 53215

Suzanne Schickanek