



Bluestar



Property Management and Development LLC

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July 19th, 2004

To: City of Milwaukee Neighborhoods and Development Committee
City Hall
200 E. Wells St.
Milwaukee, WI 53202

From: William Zaroni - Owner, Bluestar Property Management and Development, LLC

RE: Item #040212 - Ordinance relating to the change in zoning from Park (PK) to single family residential (RS6) on land located on the West Side of North 46th Street and North of West Green Tree Road. This ordinance would allow for the re-locating of several existing homes from Fox point and West Allis to 13 single-family lots.

Dear committee members,

On July 12th I attended a public hearing on the above item #040212. I was allowed very little time to explain the nature and benefits of my proposal after which about seven or eight residents that live nearby the proposed development site (on 46th and Green Tree) presented several reasons why the rezoning should be denied so that the project would in effect die. I was not given a chance to rebut any of their comments because time was short and the hearing had started about an hour later than scheduled. I write this in an effort to offer my perspective on these citizens' concerns and to also explain several benefits to the city (and the neighborhood in question) this project would provide.

Let me be clear on one thing to start. The residents that expressed their views are to be applauded for speaking their views on a subject important to them in a public forum. Each seemed like decent, reasonable person who was simply concerned about the welfare of his or her neighborhood. That is laudable. I am not confrontational by nature nor am I a brilliant salesperson (although I am considering hiring one!). I am also not some big-shot developer; I like to fix-up houses and by doing so improve neighborhoods. In the last 14 months I have purchased 12 City of Milwaukee properties (nine single family houses and three duplexes). Ten were in great disrepair and were an eyesore to their respective neighborhoods. I have rehabbed the properties to the tune of well over \$100,00.00 and have installed excellent tenants, many of whom will be participating in my company's rent-to own program. That being said, I hope it is apparent that I have put my money where my mouth is, so to speak.

The residents' concerns were primarily (though not necessarily limited to) the following main points. What follows is each point followed by a brief rebuttal:

Issue #1 - The proposed land for the development is in essence a nature preserve and pseudo-park for nearby residents that should not be disturbed. Trees will have to be cut down if homes are put on this land.

Yes the stretch of land in question can serve as a park of sorts for those who wish to utilize it as such. As I stated at the rezoning hearing, I have been there on at least a dozen occasions (the last on a 75 degree sunny Saturday afternoon) and have seen not one person walking a dog or throwing a Frisbee on this land. I see this type of activity all the time on nice sunny weekend days at other Milwaukee parks, but not this one. Maybe it was simply coincidence but I respectfully disagree that this property serves as a neighborhood park. As the committee members are well aware, Milwaukee is not a city experiencing a park shortage. In fact, Wyrick Park is just six blocks from 46th and Green Tree.

My gut opinion *and that is simply all that it is, my opinion*, is that calling this piece of land a nature preserve or park is disingenuous. It is being described in these terms because the residents who spoke last Monday simply don't want any development



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across the street, period. The "park" angle simply gives those who make the final zoning decision rationale for the refusal to re-zone the land. This land has by the way been zoned Park (PK) for only about five years. Before MMSD purchased this land it was zoned for residential development. All of the infrastructure is in place for single family homes and obviously in the past city planners thought this land to be suitable for homes.

One question I was asked at last Monday's hearing is whether trees will have to be cut down. "Yes" I replied to disdain from the questioner. Trees were undoubtedly cut down to build every home in that neighborhood at some point. I would argue that many new trees will be planted in their place by the new homeowners. Also, only part of MMSD's retention land will be developed. Much of the MMSD's retention land (and trees) will remain in tact.

Issue #2 - More homes means more traffic, i.e., a Sherman Boulevard-like nonstop cavalcade of traffic might ensue on this currently peaceful stretch of N. 46th St.

The block in question is a dead end street. This assertion is with all due respect - specious. Cruising on a quiet dead end street? I just can't see that happening - ever.

Issue #3 - There are enough problems in this neighborhood - why create more?

These homes are in excellent condition and any feature on any of them not in excellent condition will be repaired or replaced. For example, one of the homes has a roof in so-so condition. It will be ripped off and replaced. Everything down to the front doorbell will be repaired or replaced if in dubious condition or not operating property. The rhetorical question I'd present in response to this concern is "How will excellent houses hurt the neighborhood?". These are single family homes that will be sold to homeowners - not leased out to tenants. Simply put, quality homes will foster pride of ownership and help, not hurt, the neighborhood for a whole host of reasons. Most are rather obvious and brevity requires that I do not attempt to list them all here.

Issue #4 - Most of the residents in the neighborhood are just simply against it.

That may or not be true. One resident presented a list of 50 signatures to the panel at the rezoning hearing. I suspect most residents in the area are in fact opposed or perhaps indifferent. If I had my way there would be no road construction in this state ever again. I can't stand it. Being a contractor who works in all areas of the Milwaukee area, it literally drives me nuts at times. I realize, however, that roads in good repair are for the common good so I repeat "Serenity Now" to myself while sitting in traffic for an hour and somehow manage to get on with my day. Yes, there will be excavators and dump trucks making noise for a time. The process of relocating an existing house to a new foundation is significantly quicker than building a new house from scratch. My point here is that the greater good must be considered. Those in the position of making these decisions should *lead*, not simply do whatever the majority wants in all instances. We may still have British accents if George Washington had simply gone with the flow instead of revolting against oppressive British rule. The vast majority of citizens were against it at the time.

Issue #5 - Even if the development had a positive effect on property values in this neighborhood it would simply mean higher assessments and therefore higher property taxes for longtime residents of the area.

Again this a specious argument, at least from my perspective, myself being an owner of a dozen properties in the City of Milwaukee. I like equity. Equity is Good. Inflated assessments are bad and can be legally disputed, but once again, equity is a good thing. If the opposite is true then it is therefore a good idea to let the neighborhood go to seed so the property values plummet. Maybe then the tax bite won't hurt so much. This of course is ridiculous. Nobody wants a decaying neighborhood. Our punitive property taxes should be fought by electing those who won't keep raising them.

Issue #6 - MMSD promised that no development would take place on this land at any point in the future.

According to MMSD representatives that have been involved with initiating this project, this is just flat out false. No promises written or verbal were ever made regarding this land.

A final few thoughts:

If the city of Milwaukee summarily dismisses this proposal it is in effect telling me to do business elsewhere. In my mind there is no credible reason this project should be shot down. MMSD is highly in favor of completing this project. The land in question has been zoned residential in the past and all required infrastructure is in place for these homes. If this land is not rezoned expeditiously this project will not proceed. These homes must be moved by this September. I will move them elsewhere if at all possible if this rezoning vote fails. If I can't given the time constraints they will simply be bulldozed and hauled to a landfill.

Working in conjunction with Clay Patton, a mortgage broker and credit repair specialist with Mortgage Counselors Inc., we are prepared to offer attractive financing terms to those who may of thought home ownership was out of their immediate reach. Again, I want to improve this neighborhood, not harm it.



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Those on the common council who still think this is a bad idea had better not speak publicly in the future on the following topics without expecting to hear from myself and my network of tradespeople:

- The need to expand Milwaukee's tax base and/or the need to raise property taxes
- Neighborhood blight in the city of Milwaukee
- Suburban sprawl from the city of Milwaukee
- Developers not wanting to come into the city and improve neighborhoods

This project would positively address all of the above issues. I thank you for allowing me to express my views on this rezoning issue.

Sincerely,



William Zanoni - Owner, Bluestar Property Management and Development LLC



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