

PETITION FOR A SPECIAL PRIVILEGE

SP 2105

\$208.00 Publication Fee
Must Accompany This Petition
SUBMIT PETITION IN DUPLICATE

November 24, 2003

To the Honorable, The Common Council of the City of Milwaukee:

Council Members:

The undersigned Five GRUBISIC & GAYLE RIORDAN
(State whether petitioner is an individual, co-partnership, Wisconsin or foreign corporation)

being the owners of the following described real estate:

(Legal description)

and number as 2825-2827 N. MURRAY in the 3rd Aldermanic District also known by street
City of Milwaukee according to the provisions of Section 66.045 of the Wisconsin Statutes, that the following privilege be granted:

(Here describe the privilege)

a sculpture, consisting of an effigy mound and native prairie restoration

of which a plan or sketch is herewith submitted. Petitioner agrees to comply with all laws and all ordinances of the City of Milwaukee, to abide by any order or resolution of the Common Council affecting this privilege, to be primarily liable for damages to person or property by reason of the granting of such privilege, to furnish a bond and pay annual compensation as provided by law in the sum to be fixed by the proper city officers, and to file and keep current throughout the existence of the privilege, a certificate of insurance indicating applicant holds a public liability policy in at least the sums of \$25,000.00/\$50,000.00 bodily injury, and \$10,000.00 property damage, insuring the city against any liability that might arise by reason of the privilege.

Petitioner further agrees to remove said privilege whenever public necessity so requires when so ordered upon resolution adopted by the Common Council or other legislative body.

Should this special privilege be discontinued for any reason whatsoever, petitioner agrees to remove all construction work executed pursuant to this special privilege, to restore to its former condition and to the approval of the Commissioner of Public Works, any curb, pavement, or other public improvement which was removed, changed or disturbed by reason of the granting of this special privilege. Petitioner further agrees not to contest the validity of Section 66.045 of the Wisconsin Statutes, or the legality of this special privilege in any way.

**FILE WITH CITY CLERK LICENSE DIVISION
ROOM 105 CITY HALL, 200 EAST WELLS STREET**

Signed [Signature]
Address 2825-2827 N. Murray

VR

(if firm, society or corporation, give its full name)

Address

(Title or office held in same)

(Local Phone Number of Engineer/Contractor)

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In 1997 I, Gayle Riordan, replaced the front lawn at 2825 -2827 N. Murray Avenue, Milwaukee, with an effigy mound I call *Large Cat*. I put a prairie restoration on top of it, expecting this to be a dry prairie as the former lawn had burnt out every August. My mother, Eve Grubisic, the property owner, has long had an interest in environmental issues and was eager to see what the prairie would look like. Some of our favorite plants did not do well, and plants suited to wet conditions thrived. By the summer of 2002, I realized that the wet mesic prairie we actually had wasn't suited to such beautiful flowering plants as butterfly milkweed. I looked around for some place to accommodate them. I decided to create a dry sand prairie and began to inquire if the only suitable space, the land between the sidewalk and the curb, could be used for this purpose.

I contacted every department I could think of at the city of Milwaukee, including Forestry and Public Works. No one said to me that this area was a public right of way. I asked each administrator if there was another department that might have a concern. In every instance, my final contact was either an assistant superintendent or the superintendent of the department and all these administrators said it was ok to go ahead with taking out the carriage walk, building a sand based effigy, and putting a prairie on top of it.

It really did not occur to me that these people would be so irresponsible as to not know the nature of their employment. In retrospect, it seems that I was outright lied to. I made a serious effort to contact all relevant city departments and not a one of these people had any problem with this project. or indeed indicated that the city would in any way disapprove.

After the concrete of the carriage walk was broken up, the pieces were too heavy for me to remove. An assistant superintendent of Public Works came out to tell me he'd order the concrete to be picked up, stood next to the burr oak, on the land which is now in dispute, and said directly to me that it would be fine to build the effigy mound as long as I kept it under three feet. I said I planned on its being two feet high. He then looked at the tall grass prairie on *Large Cat* and said that height would be inappropriate. I said I planned on putting a low growth sand prairie of about one to two feet in height on top and gestured at

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knee level. He said that would be fine. He added that many non - conforming uses of these land strips existed, especially on the east side of town. We then chatted about my native plant species for a few minutes before he handed me his business card and left. I did at one time have his card in my folder on the *Flat Headed Snake*, the new effigy mound, but it has disappeared. I do not recall his name.

I began working on the serpent effigy in 2002 but was unable physically to complete it. With the help of several others, in 2003 I worked on it regularly, at least once a week. Unfortunately, disabling arthritis problems generally prevented more constant effort. In late summer, every few days someone from either Neighborhood Services or Public Works would call or stop by saying they'd recieved a complaint. Each time when I spoke with one of these men and explained the project, the person I spoke with agreed I could have more time to finish the sculpture before making a final determination.

However, I was told separately by two city building inspectors over the phone on Tuesday, November 11, 2003, that they would be sending bulldozers to rip out all 'the piles of dirt' with which I have surrounded the house. They specifically said the new effigy mound would be taken out on Tuesday the 18th and also claimed that they were going to take the vegetable garden and the other 'dirt' in the back yard, the miniature wetland, and even the fishpond and the older effigy mound which I constructed in 1997. This puzzled me as the vegetable garden was there before Mom bought this property, as were the raspberries, and so on.

After a lot of time and energy were expended by me, at least, the commissioner of inspectors rescinded the order for the bulldozers. He told me this over the phone on Friday noon, November 14. Unfortunately, the department of public works then sent over, hand delivered in fact, another notice around 4 pm November 15. This one claimed that the new snake effigy contravenes a city ordinance disallowing 'piles of dirt' in the city right of way. A copy of this letter is enclosed. It says I must remove the "piles of dirt' by December 1 or the city will come with bulldozers to do so. This despite my being told last year by the same department that it was ok to proceed with the effigy mound and prairie. (I did also talk last year with each neighboring

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householder.)

A very good reporter from the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* took considerable interest in this sequence of events and wrote a fair and well researched but approving article about the effigy mound and what has become the controversy surrounding it. I am including a print out of the article and the accompanying photo.

I've been informed that there is an appeal process. As I understood it, filing the petition for special privilege would delay the bulldozers until after the Common Council has reviewed my petition. On November 20, in a phone conversation with an employee of Public Works, I was told that the bulldozers have already been scheduled and would be coming to remove the effigy mound and prairie planting whether or not I file the petition on or before December 1.

*******Denial of due process**

By declaring that Public Works will be removing the effigy mound before my 'petition for special privilege' can be evaluated and presented to the Common Council, the city of Milwaukee denies me due process.

*******Selective enforcement**

Many homeowners in Milwaukee have creatively used the area between the public sidewalk and the curb or street for other purposes than what the Ordinance chapter 115, section 32 spells out as allowable. I've seen a brickwork patio placed there, numerous floriferous plantings, usually incorporating native habitat, and also seen multiple understory trees planted in that verge as a screen between the sidewalk and passing street traffic. I doubt that each of these hundreds of alternative uses of this verge has necessitated a 'petition for special privilege.' I'm enclosing photographic prints of some of these alternative uses.

The dozen or more employees of Neighborhood Services and of Public Works spoken with each cites a different problem when I speak with them. Among these so called problems are the undoubted damage to the burr oak, the undoubted erosion into the street over the winter with rain and snow of the 'pile of sand,' and the undoubted total destruction of the sculpture when a snowplow comes thru carrying before it a 6 foot swath of snow. I don't believe any of this is factual,

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nor do the several experts in their fields I've discussed these problems with. I am including among the letter of support a letter from a very well known naturalist, lecturer, and businessman, Robert Ahrenhoerster., which deals with some of these specious issues. The city's verbal complaints are illogical and unfounded.

*******Freedom of expression**

Reading this Ordinance chapter 115, section 32, indicates that the only possible use the city of Milwaukee finds for the carriage walkway is to allow homeowners to plant it with lawn grass and apply pesticides to it to make the grass grow, especially to make it grow unnaturally green in August, when lawn grass wishes to be dormant. To apply such pesticides is to kill all sow bugs, beetles, and butterflies. The ordinance does not prohibit effigy mounds nor does it prohibit sculpture. Surely, having an artwork in the carriage walkway, one which is non - polluting and maintenance free, is preferable to more pesticide strips which legally poison small animals and children, and kill insects and butterflies.

*******Equal protection**

The sculpture which I call *Flat Headed Snake* is being unfairly prosecuted. The ordinance the city cites in its notice to me does not prohibit sculpture being placed in the city right of way. If Ms. Big Bucks, living on Lake Drive, decided her Picasso sculpture was too big for her living room and moved it to the city right of way for the public as well as herself to enjoy, wouldn't city officials be thanking her for her public spirited gesture? Because my name is Riordan doesn't mean that this sculpture is illegitimate, nor ought the materials of its construction make it so. Sand and gravel and native prairie habitat ought to have a place in this city. Wisconsin has a long tradition of effigy mounds, more than a thousand years of them, and there are more effigy mounds in this state than anywhere else in North America. Can the east side of Milwaukee not accommodate three, the ancient one in Lake Park, and also my two?

The snake effigy is charming, a publicly assessable artwork provided at no cost to the city, and will have a restoration of native habitat of about 50 species of low growth grasses, sedges, and flowers, much as was here before Milwaukee became a city. Currently, two

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state threatened (endangered) species are among the plantings. Can't the city foster such a restoration of what was once the native vegetation, rather than rip it out?

Does every property in Milwaukee have to have uniform green grass? Isn't there room in the city ordinances for some variation from the norm of lawn mowers and pesticides? We have butterflies every sunny day here, from red Admirals in April to painted ladies in October, as late in the year as a few days before Halloween. Yet the city says that pesticides are so legal anyone may use them on grass, and no one who does that will ever see a butterfly. Or even an earthworm. Pesticides are legal and an effigy mound and prairie are illegal? I hope not.

******* article taken from the web page of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. It was formatted differently in the hardcopy Metro section of the paper on Sunday, November 16, 2003.**

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/metro/nov03/185268.asp>

Artist, city clash over a snake built on public grass

Last Updated: Nov. 15, 2003

Jim Stingl

Don't call it a berm, Gayle Riordan said, pointing to the dirt mound - 39 feet long, 3 feet high and shaped like a snake - in front of her house on Milwaukee's east side.

"It's a wonderful sculpture. And it was my intention to share it with the neighborhood," she said.

If you want to see it, you better hurry before the city sends over a

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bulldozer. On Friday, Gayle was handed an order from the Department of Public Works saying she has until Dec. 1 to remove the "piles of dirt." Ouch - that makes "berm" sound artistic.

A couple problems here. A lot of the neighbors don't like the snake, so they're not in a sharing mood. Some have complained to the city.

And it's slithering on city property, that strip of land between the sidewalk and the street.

(Not to digress, but I've been asking around to find out what people call that grassy strip in front of most houses, the one along the street. The City of Milwaukee officially terms it the right of way. Take your pick from these others: parkway, terrace, apron, park strip, parking strip, verge (that's supposedly what they say in Australia), easement, carriage lawn, tree lawn (that one is in the dictionary) and tree border. I heard grassy knoll, too, but I think that was from a conspiracy buff.)

Anyway, Gayle Riordan lives with her mom in a duplex they own at 2827 N. Murray Ave. Gayle has a degree in art from UWM and pink hair, and she paints, teaches art and creates these effigy mounds.

She will never be mistaken for someone who wants to look out the front window and see a perfect green lawn. Six years ago, she built a mound in the shape of a cat in the front yard and covered it with sunflowers, milkweed, sedges, natural grasses, forked aster, strawberries - more than 80 native plants, some of them deemed threatened species.

Gayle swears that last summer she stood on the sidewalk with a man who works for the city and he told her it would be OK to build another mound on the right of way, as long it wasn't too high. But she has nothing in writing, and she says she didn't know until much later that she and her mother didn't actually own that piece of land.

"I thought I had permission," she said.

So she had a few tons of sand-dirt-gravel mix dropped on the front lawn, and this past summer she got busy on her mound, named "Flat Headed

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Snake." A few friends pitched in, which helped a lot because Gayle has severe arthritis.

Still, work progressed more slowly than expected, and the mound was not finished until last week. She said she planned to sprinkle it with seeds this weekend, then sit back and wait for magic to happen in spring - barring the bulldozer visit, or course.

"You have to smell the seeds," she said, holding bags of future purple love grass and flax and a few dozen other plants in front of my nose. To walk around the cluttered yard with Gayle is to get a lesson in horticulture.

Art has a way of eliciting strong reactions from people, especially if it's situated in such a way to make it hard to get out on the passenger side of your car. The brown snake and "Blue Shirt" have much in common.

Steve Schaffer, who lives across the street, likes Gayle but not her creation. His own front lawn is something of a prairie, so that's not his beef.

"I don't like all of that dirt so close to the street," he said. "I don't like those big boulders," meaning the big boulders Gayle has placed at the snake's south end to look like teeth. A "Picasso-esque" snake, she calls it.

Another neighbor from across the street, Michael Mooney, doesn't oppose the effigy mound. He said the street is so often parked solid with cars of UWM students that he couldn't see it anyway.

"I wouldn't do it in my front yard, but that she's doing it in her front yard doesn't bother me at all," he said.

East side Ald. Michael D'Amato said he wants to see the snake driven out of the neighborhood.

My own opinion is that the world needs all the public art it can get, especially when no tax dollars are involved. That's easy for me to say because I don't live on Murray Ave., but what can one prairie snake hurt?

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Gayle plans to fight the knock-it-down order and petition the city for a special privilege permit allowing the snake to stay on the city-owned strip.

DPW spokeswoman Cecilia Gilbert said the city worries that the snake and the snowplows will tangle this winter, that the mound will erode into the street, and that a tiny tree in the folds of the snake will not thrive.

So they've nailed Gayle on a Chapter 115 Section 32 rap and called her art a "hazardous condition." If she doesn't get rid of it, they plan to send "city forces" to her street and then stick her with the bill for the removal.

Gayle said she would hate to see that, although she's not keen on lying down in front of earthmovers.

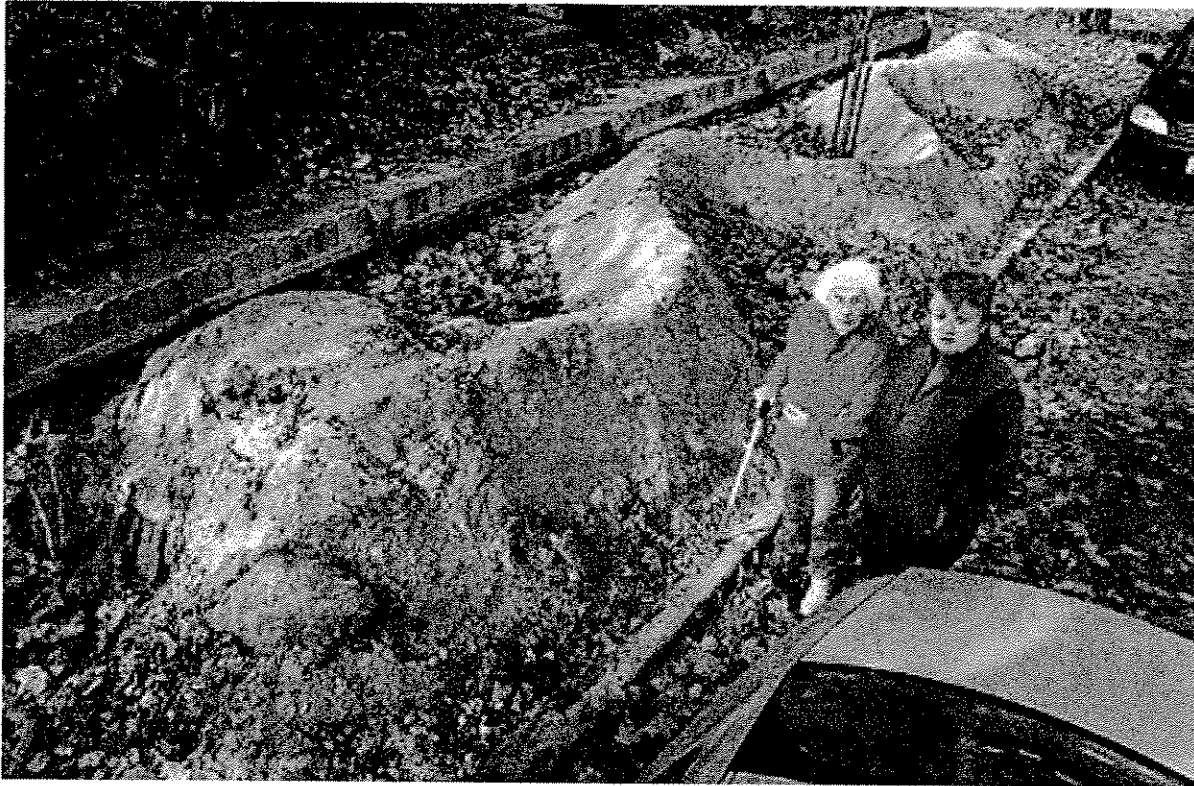
"There's a great deal of pleasure in seeing something wild here in the city," she said.

A 39-foot snake would definitely qualify.

*******photo accompanying the article quoted above**

<http://graphics.jsonline.com/graphics/news/img/nov03/STINCOL16P.jpg>

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Photo/David Joles

Artist Gayle Riordan (right), shown with her mother, Eve Grubisic, built a 39-foot snake dirt mound on the city-owned right of way in front of her house. While she calls it "a wonderful sculpture," the city has informed her that she has until Dec. 1 to remove it. Gayle plans to fight the order and petition the city for a special privilege permit allowing the snake to stay on the strip.

From the Nov. 16, 2003 editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

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Included in this petition are copies of the following letters of support recieved on or before November 25:

- * Gerald Otone**
- * Joe Des Armo**
- * Doug Armstrong**
- * Barbara Collignon**
- * Claude Grant**
- * Robert Ahrenhoerster**
- * Mark Adams**
- * Nancy Angelini Kampmeier**
- * Mike and Kathy Mooney**
- * Pamela Sweet**

To be included in this petition are photographs showing the effigy mound, typical low growth prairie flowers, and a small and partial documentation of the numerous non - complying uses of the area between the sidewalk and street;

a listing of specific native plant species sown and transplanted onto *Flat Headed Snake*;

and signatures on a petition circulated by Grubisic and Riordan among the neighbors, and at a breakfast sponsored by UWM, showing that the neighborhood is in support of the *Flat Headed Snake*.



Department of Public Works

November 14, 2003

Mariano A. Schifalacqua
Commissioner of Public Works

James P. Purko
Director of Operations

Ms. Gaile Riordan
2825 North Murray Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53211-3649

Dear Ms. Riordan:

Field investigation revealed a hazardous condition, piles of dirt and fence that exists in the tree border portion of the public way (area between the concrete walk and curb) in front of your property at **2825 North Murray Avenue**.

This area is graded with **piles of dirt and fence**. This is a violation of Chapter 115, Section 32, of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances: Obstruction on Public Ways, which states in part:


"No person shall build, place or maintain... or pile, deposit or place, or permit to be piled, deposited, or placed in, upon or over any public way or public place in the City of Milwaukee any obstruction, encroachment, building, structure, ...rubbish, garbage, wood, coal, dirt or other article or obstruction. ...as to interfere with the complete, free, and convenient use of the same by the public.."

You are directed to remove the piles of dirt and the fence and restore the area to its former condition by **December 1, 2003**. Failure to comply with this directive will result in City forces removing the piles and the fence. You, as the property owner, will then be billed all resulting labor and equipment costs, including overhead charges, for this service.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Ralph Sorenson at 286-3435.

Your prompt cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

Very truly yours,


Mariano A. Schifalacqua
Commissioner of Public Works

MAS:CG:mra
c: Alderman Michael D'Amato

*hand delivered by Cecilia Gilbert
afternoon of November 14 abt 345pm*

2020 E. Park Pl., #108
Milwaukee WI 53211
November 14, 2003

Ralph Sorenson
Field Operations Inspections Specialist
Department of Public Works
Room 710, Municipal Building
841 N. Broadway
Milwaukee WI 53202

Dear Mr. Sorenson:

I am writing in support of a "Petition for Special Privilege" for Gayle Riordan, 2825 N. Murray Avenue, to allow a form of natural landscaping (in the form of an "effigy mound") on the property between sidewalk and street.

The City should be supporting and encouraging the practices of natural landscaping in our yards, as these practices diversify the vegetation, provide habitat for native species, and reduce the use of water and purchased inputs such as herbicides and fertilizers. A prairie garden, such as one that already exists on this property, is far more beneficial in our populated urban environment than a highly cosmetic lawn which may be harboring substances hazardous to children playing.

I urge you to grant Ms. Riordan's request, rather than making this troublesome for her. She has acted in good faith in attempting to prepare the ground this fall. The area is visually attractive and is not presenting any hazards to anyone.

I do hope that Milwaukee's homeowners will continue to have the right to choose the desired landscaping for their yards.

Sincerely,

Gerald Ottone

c: City Clerk, License Division
G. Riordan

November 17, 2003

Barbara J. Collignon
4439 N. Frederick Ave.
Shorewood, WI 53211

City Clerk License Division
Room 105 City Hall
200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53211

Re: Gayle Riordan and Special License

Dear City Clerk,

I am writing in support of Gayle Riordan and her effigy mounds. I think she should be able to keep the Cat effigy mound she constructed on her lawn and the Flat Headed Snake effigy constructed on the parkway. Her back yard is her property and she should be able to cultivate it as she pleases. Only uninformed people would call these effigies and the garden just "piles of dirt".

I have visited her sculptures when various plants were in bloom. I tasted the sweet berries that grow there, admired the beauty of many of the plants and listened with interest and amazement as Ms. Riordan explained the various plants that grow there. She has carefully chosen these plants, which are native to the area, and chose them purposefully because one rarely sees them any more. Butterflies enjoy the plants growing on the effigies and it is important that butterflies can find such welcoming, nurturing places.

Her efforts should be praised and encouraged as educational and creative. Creating these special garden spaces has been costly both in terms of dollars spent and labor.

If a citizen in the Riverwest area can bury cars in an artistic way on his lawn, then Ms. Riordan should be allowed to keep her effigies. Unusual, non-conformist and artistic front yards and parkways are interesting and uplifting. They give children who pass delightful memories and teach them that we can bring art into our daily lives in many ways.

From the picture that was in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on Sunday, it looked as if the parkway Flat Head Snake would not interfere with plowing sidewalks.

I would encourage you to make an exception for Ms. Riordan and her sculptures and allow her to keep them.

Sincerely,



Barbara J. Collignon

Douglas Armstrong
1869N Cambridge Avenue
Apartment 404
Milwaukee, WI 53202

City Clerk
Licence Division
Room 105
City Hall
200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Regarding Pition For Special Priviliges

I am writing in support of the efforts by Gayle Riordon to create a Native-American effigy mound on her property at 2825 & 7 Murray Avenue. Having Kown Ms. Riordan For many years, I respect her deep convictions of the environment. ecology. Native-American culture, plant=kife, access to art and public art. I believe that every thing she has attented astablish on her land is an epression of those beliefs. I hope when considering this matter, you will look beyond the more immediate concerns and concider the long-ranging issues od enviroment, culture, and history which Ms. Riordan wishes to respect In the best way one can: thru action and example.

Respectfully.


Douglas Armstrong

1200 E. Singer Circle
Milwaukee WI 53212
November 14, 2003

City Clerk, Licenses Division
Room 105, City Hall
200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee WI 53202

To Whom It May Concern:

I have helped Gayle Riordan planting two trees and a whole lot of rocks at her and her mother's property, 2825-27 N. Murray Avenue.

Last Tuesday, after we planted the third tooth on her effigy mound, the Big Anaconda, I asked her why the city was making such a fuss. Why can't people do what they want with their own property?

Even if the snake is in the city right-of-way, I think it's a great sculpture. She should be allowed to keep the effigy mound.

Sincerely,

Joe Des Armo

c: Gayle Riordan

To Whom It May Concern,

On Sunday, November 16, 2003, I bought the Sunday, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. I turned to the Jim Stingl article because the snake sculpture in the photograph looked really exciting to me.

As I read the article and realized it was about the city bulldozing the sculpture, I was upset, and decided I must speak against your actions to destroy this free artwork for the city.

I live in West Bend, and I have the luxury of owning seventy diverse acres in the Town of West Bend. Here I get to see all of the beauty that Gayle is trying to recreate in Milwaukee. I have the pleasure of seeing grasses swaying in the wind, watching birds gathering nesting material in spring and eating seeds in the fall, I witness, in summer, the changes in color palette as the grasses ripen and become laden with seeds, in the fall they change again and become the colors of butterscotch and Carmel corn, in winter the snow caresses the grasses and it is the one place in the landscape that seems alive with movement in the stillness of winter.

You have the chance to offer your city a small slice of this beauty by issuing a special license for this sculpture, and you choose to destroy it before it has a chance to enhance Milwaukee. I guess people will just have to move to West Bend if they want to see something other than green mowed grass in their neighbors yard.

Why don't you give the sculpture a year reprieve to see how lovely the sculpture will be in the next four seasons? If it doesn't work out then you can call in the bulldozers and not have everyone who loves beauty be upset with the City of Milwaukee.

Yours in Art,

Pamela Sweet
Pamela Sweet

3061 Mileview Road

West Bend, WI 53095

P.S. Good Luck, Gayle, I sent copies of the above letter to - Riveredge Nature Center, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, City Clerk License Division, and Mike D'Amato.

2824 N. Murray Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53211
21 November, 2003

City Clerk License Division
Room 105 City Hall
200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear City Clerk:

Concerning Gayle Riordan's petition for a Special Privilege at 2825 N. Murray Avenue: My wife Kathy and I live in the house directly across the street, and we wish to write in support of Gayle's petition.

The snake sculpture that Gayle has created on the parkway is an interesting, worthwhile alternative to green grass with yearly applications of herbicide and fertilizer. It's not in anybody's way, is not a nuisance or an obstruction, and when it is planted with a variety of native plants, it's an interesting addition to the neighborhood.

She began the installation, as I understand, without permission from your office. But she did so unwittingly, at considerable effort and expense, and before the city comes in to remove the sculpture, she should be allowed to complete her petition, have her day of hearing, and allow others to come forward in her support.

I strongly urge your office to grant her a hearing before taking action to remove the sculpture. The city in general and your office in particular should encourage and not discourage creative, interesting efforts such as Gayle has made. I urge you to grant her a special privilege.

Sincerely,

Mitchell W. Mooney
Kathryn W. Mooney

Dear Hayle,

11-19-03

It is by the will and power of God that I am able to steal a silent moment from the midst of these prison fences, and in my thievery I am very much content with my inner beings. Hayle, your letter comes after reading about your plight in the newspaper. I think it's just awful that people have nothing better to do than complain about something so trivial as your art work in your front yard. I have a friend who stays on Maryland and I often saw your word and thought it to be quite unique (odd) but unique!

If people were to complain about all the crime that goes on in the city then it would be a safer place to live.

Jesus Christ, so you know we can't stop them from talking about us! If it's not

To: "nakmeier" <nakmeier@wi.rr.com>
From: Ashley Tiwara <grubisic@netwurx.net>
Subject: Re: concern
Cc:
Bcc:

*Received Nov 24 2003
from nakmeier*

X-Attachments:

Dear Alderman D'Amato, other government officials, and concerned individuals:

I have recently read about the issue concerning one of your long time residents, involving easement artwork. This rather benign serpent seems to be causing mountains to be made out of molehills (almost literally!). There doesn't seem to be any truly hazardous condition ensuing here. We are talking about a very intelligent woman who is smart enough to know about all of the issues surrounding the creation of this environmental artwork.

[1] Many city homes have unusual things going on in their easement and are not badgered.

[2] There is no real hindrance to city plowing operations or to cars. First of all, many city curbs are too high to open car doors properly. Secondly, when snow is plowed people often can not open a passenger door. Thirdly, most of the passengers are students who drive alone so do not need to open a passenger door. The cars that are towed are a problem—not two small spots where there may or may not be a very minor problem for opening car doors. The height of this whole serpent will sink appreciably —by probably 6 inches or so.

[3] The small tree that is growing is not in danger. Foresters have been consulted with on the matter. Common sense alone tells you that this woman knows how to grow a tree—she is a gardener. She knows about the kind of roots on this particular species. City workers, who notoriously plant trees and surround them with concrete, are in less of a position to explain proper tree growth.

[4] The city has no right to remove any backyard plantings. I have read that this was also brought up for some reason.

[5] Since it was a city worker who said it would be all right, then the city should be in a helpful and apologetic mode. Ludicrous thoughts of

charging for any removal exhibit extreme misjudgement.

[6] The varied and constantly changing arguements offered by the city have little to do with any hazard to the city. Instead, there are comments about how this mound will erode or get ruined or how the small tree will die. These are her own issues to deal with and she knows how. The city needs to protect it. It benefits the city and it cost them nothing. Leave it be and see it's beauty next summer.

[7] Wouldn't it have been a great article to read in the Journal? ——— "with its strong backed workers and proper equipment, Milwaukee's city workers swiftly helped finish moving the earth needed to complete a beautiful and artistic natural area that will draw the splendor of butterflies next summer—all from their half hour of helpfulness." That's one kind of article that demonstrates the sort of spirit that would attract people to Milwaukee as a desireable place to live.

[8] Do you consider it shameful to make threats, distressing artist/caretakers of the natural environment —especially when one is an elderly and long time resident and the other has severe arthritis and health conditions, and yet pushes herself to beautify her city space?

[9] These artistically planted areas bless the city with natural flora and fauna. This is what Chicago's Mayor Daley has spent millions on because of his wise and proven belief that flowers and nature have a calming effect on the city's people.

[10] Please discuss with any informed naturalist, the horrible effects of the chemicals that the city applies to green spaces. Animals and the whole ecosystem are profoundly affected. Is this a practice the city should focus on correcting instead? One could read information written by nationally known Milwaukee naturalist Lori Otto for starters.

If the city does truly need to devote it's time to pursuing "hazardous conditions" in the city, then I would suggest devoting a concerning eye to the exhibition that just opened in the art gallery at Cardinal Stritch University. It's all about Matthew Groshek's "Green Mapping" Project and the work from around the world. Universally designed icons mark the positive, healthy, and beautiful environmental activities, services and points of interest in Milwaukee. But it won't take long for that concerning eye to spot the many icons marking toxic and

poisonous areas lying underground or above ground in our city. These, dear readers, are the tougher issues and the ones needing that wonderful spirit of determination and fight exhibited in Milwaukee, that is at times being fruitlessly and unfortunately misplaced.

Alderman and government workers—I ask this of you:

Sometimes there is a need for sensible decisions to be made on an individual basis because they are fair and right—not just because they don't fit the usual mold. Some things need a closer look in order to make the proper decision even though it takes a few more minutes and bit more brain-power. Be creative in your thinking. Don't blindly follow without concern. Relationships with people and the earth are intrinsically meant to be the highest human concern in these short lives of ours. "The way things are" isn't always the way things should be. It's not always the best or healthiest choice. Think about the way things could be—and then do it.

If you need any help with thinking creatively about how to get any job done using the above focus, I would be glad to assist in any way possible.

Thank you for you generous gift of time in reading this.

Sincerely,

Nancy Angelini Kampmeier

Mark Adams" <mark@markartunlimited.com>

gale

I am going to look at the snake, see if there is hope. now is a good time for this to be going on,

being in a city that is so behind the world and waiting to break out. the snake and other instulations may be the only way to open the eyes of the shallow minded.

the city dosnt care if there curbs break toes like mine, same with the water meeters.

but this is milwaukee.

the old german zone.

they think they the city hall owns us.

if the people dont stand up soon there will be a big wall up.

sad but true.

keep the faith

I cant wait to see the snake.

mark adams

11-18-03

To Whom It May Concern

Kayle Riordan is planting a nature prairie on an effigy mound she has created. This plant community is made up of nature, non-invasive plants that pose less risk to allergy sufferers than lawn grass. They will also add color through a good portion of the growing season. Because of their extensive root systems they will hold the soil better than lawn grasses and create a fertile soil many times deeper than the conventional lawn.

Much of southern Wisconsin was originally home to a group of Native Americans we call the Mound Builders. They constructed effigy mounds in many different animal shapes. Our ancestors destroyed many of these. To reconstruct one, at a smaller scale and plant it with its original plant

community type is not only appropriate,
but will serve to instruct those people
of that neighborhood about its early history.
I believe both the effigy mound and
the prairie planting should be allowed.

Sincerely

R. Ahrenhoerster

R. AHRENHOERSTER
OWNER OPERATOR
PRAIRIE SEED SOURCE
P.O. Box 83
NORTH LAKE, WI. 53064

Approx. to scale

← 2825-2827 N. Murray →

