

November 8, 2004

Ald. Michael D'Amato  
and  
Milwaukee City Plan Commission  
809 N. Broadway  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Ald. Michael D'Amato and members of the Milwaukee City Plan Commission:

A Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District is a tool used in some communities to identify and protect the character of established neighborhoods. The objective is to maintain and conserve the neighborhood's character by outlining procedures and policies for alterations or demolition of existing structures and design of new construction in the district. Goals for a Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District may include:

- Protecting and strengthening the desirable and unique design characteristics, physical features, identity, charm, and 'flavor' of a specific area;
- Promoting compatible new development while preventing incompatible alterations or in-fill development;
- Providing property owners with clear guidelines for remodeling and new construction;
- Encouraging civic pride and incentives for enhancement of properties within the district, while working to prevent deterioration and blight.

Milwaukee's East Village is a unique and distinctive Polish immigrant neighborhood which contributes significantly to the overall character and identity of the City of Milwaukee and is worthy of preservation and protection. A Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District will benefit the East Village and the City of Milwaukee as a whole by providing:

- A more predictable course of development for both neighborhood property owners and the development community;
- A means of self-determination for residential and commercial East Village stakeholders.

Without a clear vision for the neighborhood, it will lose its distinct character and dissolve into "just another old neighborhood". Benefits of providing this type of protection to the East Village include:

- Proactive neighborhood planning preserves the neighborhood's unique character;
- Allows for planned growth by removing underlying pressures for incompatible development while encouraging contextually appropriate projects;
- Strengthens the character of the neighborhood; neighborhood-based design standards address the character defining elements of local identity and perception, and reflect the character of this individual neighborhood;
- This is a resident driven initiative - design standards were created by East Village stakeholders who have been meeting for over 10 years in an effort to preserve the integrity of their neighborhood;
- Provides protection, preservation, and enhancement of unique historic immigrant neighborhood
- No two Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts are alike because each is tailored to address the concerns of an individual neighborhood;
- Would provide East Village homeowners and property owners with clear guidelines on how they can improve their property while allowing for their unique situations and protecting the distinctive character of their neighborhood.

Due to the benefits outlined above, I ask you to support the creation of the East Village Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District.

Respectfully,



Virginia Cassel  
Board Member  
Milwaukee Preservation Alliance