

From: Bohl, James
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2013 9:31 PM
To: Lee, Chris
Subject: Fwd: Housing Infrastructure Preservation Fund

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Allyson Nemec <nembad@sbcglobal.net>
Date: October 28, 2013 at 4:51:09 PM CDT
To: "jbohl@milwaukee.gov" <jbohl@milwaukee.gov>, "wwade@milwaukee.gov" <wwade@milwaukee.gov>, "twitko@milwaukee.gov" <twitko@milwaukee.gov>, "mmurph@milwaukee.gov" <mmurph@milwaukee.gov>, Bob Bauman <rjbauma@milwaukee.gov>
Subject: Housing Infrastructure Preservation Fund

Alderpersons:

Please consider my attached letter of support to maintain funding limits for the Housing Infrastructure Preservation Fund.

Regards,

Allyson Nemec

Alderman Bohl (chair); Alderman Wade, Alderman Witkowski; Alderman Murphy and
Alderman Bauman
City Council – Zoning Neighborhoods and Development Committee
City Hall, Room 205
200 E. Wells St., Milwaukee, WI 53202
Via e-mail

RE: Funding of the Housing Infrastructure Preservation Fund
City of Milwaukee 2014 Budget

Members of the Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee:

I am a resident of the Historic Concordia Neighborhood, and own an architectural firm located in the Cold Spring Park Neighborhood. Both my residence and my business property are located in State and National Historic Districts. I am past chair of the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Milwaukee.

Our City is fortunate to have excellent housing stock designed and built by true craftsmen. It is due to the nature of this design and construction that we have many historic districts in our city. Many of the non-historically designated areas also share the quality of construction and detailing of the historic areas, blending the distinction between neighborhoods. I have lived in three distinct areas of the city: the East Side and Washington Heights (both non-historic) and now Historic Concordia. Each house and neighborhood has been superior in craftsmanship, and a home seen as a “deal” by friends and relatives visiting from outside of Milwaukee.

Unfortunately, many neighborhoods such as ours have fallen on hard times since 2008. Several of our neighbors literally walked away from their homes, and foreclosures and board-ups became prevalent. Those of us remaining were often “upside down”, “under water” or our home values broke even to our mortgage amount; leaving us just able to make our mortgage payments and hope for increases in valuation. Scary times!

The Housing Infrastructure Preservation Fund provided grants and coordinated work of several key properties in our neighborhoods that stabilized our housing infrastructure, thereby encouraging private investment. Several homes have been renovated by the program and have returned to private ownership. I believe that these rehabilitations made it possible for others looking at purchasing foreclosed properties in our neighborhoods, most notably properties on Kilbourn, and on State just east and west of 29th Street. Had these HIPF properties been allowed to further deteriorate or been demolished, I do not believe this private investment would have happened. I understand that some HIPF Properties are rehabilitated and vacant, such as the one on McKinley Boulevard. But the transformation of this property through rehabilitation instead of creating a missing tooth in our historic urban fabric is moving in the right direction. We have built it; homeowners will come. In Concordia have several new neighbors, including residents of the HIPF homes, making substantial investments, and stabilizing our neighborhoods.

I may not be able to make tomorrow’s meeting, but I urge you to consider:

- Stabilizing the budget to continue to invest in our neighborhoods: Continue to fund the Housing Infrastructure Preservation Fund at **\$600,000** instead of lowering the budget to \$150,000 in 2014.
- Revising the cap on expenditures for any project undertaken by the Housing Infrastructure Preservation Fund from an arbitrary \$50,000 to **an amount equal to the 2008 assessed value of the property**. This allows for the flexibility to fund key catalytic projects to spur future private developments.
- Providing budget flexibility: if the proposed investment exceeded this level of spending, the Joint Committee on the Redevelopment of Abandoned and Foreclosed Homes should be able to **grant a waiver and permit the expenditure to move forward**.

The Mayor's budget presentation for 2014 concentrates on Strong Neighborhoods. Our housing stock is strong, but foreclosures and abandonment erode at our valuation. Stabilizing properties ebbs the tide of disinvestment. I believe that flexibility within the Housing Infrastructure Preservation Fund program will lead to neighborhoods throughout Milwaukee strengthening in future years. Please keep this tool in our redevelopment toolbox.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allyson Nemeck". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Allyson Nemeck, AIA