

Dear Mr. Palmer, Village Board Members, and Building Board Members,

Given the recent piece published in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel regarding the proposed development of the Reinder's property and the lopsided positive tone of the article, we wanted to put forth our opinion and concerns once again regarding the development. We spoke at the first building board meeting in March, have shared with you our concerns directly, and also have been at the forefront of distributing information regarding the proposal with regular emails of notes from the sparse number of public meetings, ad hoc committee meetings, and other forums.

This is a small, key piece of property within the village. It should not be developed hastily or without significant consideration of how this will change the make up of our downtown. If done right and to scale with the neighboring buildings and homes, it could certainly enhance the village and improve the current state of the property. The current proposal mirrors that of a McMansion on a postage stamp piece of property—too big, too dense, and all while asking to be gifted with even more property that is not rightfully theirs to make it even larger. The proposal oozes with greed in its scale and density. Clearly the sole focus is maximum profit for the developer and land owner rather than value for the community. It is hard to believe that if an individual family proposed to build an excessively large home on a tiny piece of property while ALSO asking that the right of way be granted to include village land that such a request would be approved or even considered.

This proposal as it stands violates the core values of this village and the ideals of the people who live here and seek to live here. It was just this past week that I had a friend who had grown up in Brookfield and recently returned to the area call to ask me about real estate in Elm Grove as she is seeking to buy a house here. “I feel like I’m in a storybook when I drive through Elm Grove—there is nowhere else like it,” she said. That is exactly how we have always felt about this place and is a sentiment I have heard over and over from neighbors who live here as well as acquaintances that recognize this from their experience in Elm Grove. What we have here is unique—it is treasured by those who live here and recognized by those who are just passing by. **A massive housing complex in the heart of the village most certainly is misaligned with the values that we all treasure and that are at stake to be lost altogether.**

You do not have to just accept what has been proposed. Allowing a Walmart-style, bigger is better development that overwhelms and dwarfs our quaint downtown would be a massive error that could not be undone and would change the face of our village permanently. You could never undo a mistake of this magnitude. Change is inevitable and we have been reasonable and accepting of a development on this property. What we cannot accept is seeing the very fabric of the village ruined for the profit of a few under the guise that it is “a legacy” or an essential need to sustain the lives we all currently lead here quite happily and peacefully. **Elm Grove is a haven. Let’s all focus our efforts to keep it that way. Progress and development can be achieved while still maintaining the values that this community holds dear and tempering the greed of a few.**

Sincerely,

Drs. Crystal Kleiber Balderrama and Tadeo Diaz Balderrama

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