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December 10, 2019

Gina Kozlik
City Clerk
201 Delafield Street
Room 104
Waukesha, WI 53188

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing to inform you of our request to appeal the decision of the Landmarks Commission made at the meeting dated November 6, 2019 regarding window replacement at 233 N. Charles Street, Waukesha, WI 53186, meeting ID# 19-1444. We respect the commission and their mission. However, after the previously mentioned meeting, that respect has been compromised and we feel that the commission overlooked one of its principal guidelines by not taking steps to work with the applicants. Rather, a cold and harsh judgement was passed based on inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and false statements presented by members of the commission.

“The Landmarks Commission recognizes that it will not be able to achieve its goals without the cooperation of property owners, so it seeks to work with applicants, rather than against them, to help them find the best way to maintain their properties.”

We do regret (and have apologized to the committee) beginning this project before having an approved certificate of appropriateness. All permits were approved by the building inspector before work began and from the building inspector side there is no need for permits to replace windows. From the street it is impossible to tell the difference in the windows we have replaced whereas other items such as the terrible aluminum siding (installed by past owners) covering up the original wood siding is a far more substantial breach of the preservation of this home. It should also be noted that there are in fact other homes in the district with vinyl windows in place.

The home at 233 N. Charles Street is no doubt an important part of Waukesha's history. Built by John Smeaton, founder of Silurian Springs, in 1878, it was one of the first homes in the Smeaton Subdivision. When we purchased this home, its condition was condemnable: rodent and critter infested, mold stricken, weeds growing through the floor, and trees that had fallen through the roof. Over the past two years we have saved this house and taken it from an eye soar to a home that people in the neighborhood praise. We have maintained its historic look and have even brought back its wonderful old front porch.

We plan to continue renovating and restoring this home so that it may remain in good standing in the McCall Street historic district for another 140 years. To achieve this, there will be opportunities to incorporate modern building materials that result in both energy efficiency and ensure longevity. Wood windows allow neither. New designs and advancements in the vinyl window industry make it possible to retain period and historic looks in old homes such as ours. And, like most of the old homes in the historic

district, every wood window in our home will eventually need to be replaced. With that said, we ask that the decision of the LC be reversed and the windows replaced be allowed to stay.

We look forward to hearing back from you with the next steps in this appeal process as well as providing any additional information to support our request.

Regards,

Morgan & Shelby Gutenkunst