

Courthouse Neighborhood Report

From the Courthouse Area Neighborhood Association
Spring 1994

Important Questions and Answers

Is our neighborhood now protected?

No. It is not. Current County policy still exists to acquire homes in the block east of the Courthouse for parking. The County Executive's plan to acquire four more city blocks of houses west of Walnut and south of Sixth Streets is only on hold, not withdrawn. We are not "saved" until that policy, and plan, attached to a \$200,000 1994 budget figure, are replaced or withdrawn.

But aren't we protected as an historical area?

No. We recently applied for and received designation by the Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation as one of the "Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties" in Wisconsin. This is a statewide alert that the Courthouse Neighborhood is one of ten Wisconsin sites that deserves priority preservation attention. **It is not**, however, any form of legal protection under current law, contrary to the impression some were given by newspaper coverage of the event.

Why be listed as "endangered"?

As one of several reasons why the neighborhood should be saved, it shows that our neighborhood is a historical site worthy of saving. It shows that it is not just of local, but also of state and national significance. It means that people from around the state are paying close attention to the future of the neighborhood, and look to Appleton and Outagamie County to be sensitive to its future. Based on other endangered sites listed this year, it also shows that our neighborhood is as important as Frank Lloyd Wright's home, "Taliesin", or Lunt and Fontaine's "Ten Chimneys", or the Fox River Locks.

Is history the only argument to save our neighborhood?

No. There are also economic and environmental concerns - loss of tax base, increased traffic congestion, pollution, surface water runoff. There's potential decay to surrounding neighborhoods and the impact on neighborhood schools. We are looking at these as well as legal means to protect the area from commercial encroachment.

Where are we now with the county?

We continue to wait for the release of a parking and land use study by East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission - perhaps mid May. Upon its release, County Executive Ron Van De Hey intends to meet with city, county and neighborhood representatives to consider the study's options and merits.

We have been preparing for this meeting in the intervening months. A formal mission and a set of goals has been established. These were provided to ECWRPC during an informational meeting granted at our request. We met with the State and National Trusts for Historic Preservation and Wisconsin State Historical Society, during Preservation Day activities in Madison. We are compiling detailed historical records of some 60 + homes and plan to nominate 1 or more residential districts in the neighborhood to the National Register of Historic Places. We sought opinions on legal measures to preserve the neighborhood. We have also successfully sought for consideration of a Historical Preservation Ordinance for the City of Appleton, and continue to push for city cooperation towards a solution to the parking controversy.

In the meantime, a proposal by Ald. Walter Kalata, and Supervisor Eugene Kloes to establish a separate committee to study the county's use of the city's West Parking Ramp was voted down recently by the County Board, 23-14. We have since learned that a majority of county supervisors do support studying this option, but objected to the proposal for various procedural reasons. Because of the close vote, Suprv. Kloes may reintroduce this proposal again on **May 10th**. If the decision is made to go ahead, we, the neighbors, must show our support at the next County Board meeting. **You will be called to attend this important meeting if Proposition 12 is reintroduced.**

What is the status of the Neighborhood Association?

The Courthouse Neighborhood Steering Committee has now become the "**Courthouse Area Neighborhood Association**" and is currently filing incorporation papers with the State of Wisconsin. We will be a pro-active, non-profit corporation representing the interests of residents living within the area bounded by Memorial Drive, Prospect Avenue, Oneida Street and Lawrence Street. A special announcement will be made upon incorporation.

How may I contribute to the Association?

We need your input and comments. Don't assume that we uncover everything. We need the neighborhood "network" to keep on top of things.

We also need your home's historical survey if it has not already been turned in. A historical database on every home in the neighborhood is being started. We don't want to leave out anything.

After incorporation, the association will be funded by supporting memberships and donations. A formal invitation to join will be sent to those who have already expressed an interest in joining. Until that time, donations are urgently needed to cover organizational costs, and the expenses of defending our primary cause.

Please make financial contributions to: "Courthouse Area Neighborhood Association"; 523 South State Street; Appleton, Wisconsin 54911-6044.

Thank You,

Frank G. Council, Chairman
Sally Johnson, Vice Chairman
Meg Casey, Secretary
Courthouse Area Neighborhood Association