

January 23, 2011

Dear YMCA Board Member,

As head of the group that is trying to save the Bartles-Maguire gas station, I want to let you know that our numbers are growing. There are about 20 individuals who are actively working on saving the gas station and another 50 or so individuals who have requested updates on the efforts, but do not have the time right now to help out. I have over 25 years of experience in historic preservation and this "house" style gas station has generated more interest than any of the other properties that I have participated in the efforts to save. We currently have 430 signatures on the petition. Most are from the city of Waukesha and Waukesha County. I currently have several petitions still circulating so I am sure the numbers will go higher. I am sending copies of the petition to Sandy Wysocki because she is your VP of Community Awareness. I am retaining the originals because we will continue to get signatures on the petition. I also am sending a copy of the National Register nomination papers to Ms. Wysocki. I was contacted in December by a graduate student in Chicago about the gas station. She and some of her classmates in the graduate program for historic preservation have been following the efforts to save the building. She had to write a paper on Adaptive Reuse of an historic structure for a final in one of her courses and asked if I could provide her with more details on the gas station. Her Adaptive Reuse plan utilized the gas station as a coffee shop that was run by the residents of the new apartment building. I would be happy to share this paper with you and Common Bond.

Over the last few months I have had requests from several groups to talk about the gas station at their meetings. At these meetings, I have had people ask whether or not the YMCA will sell or lease the building. I also have had numerous people ask if any fundraising is going on to pay for repairs or maintenance to the building. There is the interest to save and preserve the building and I would be willing to help spearhead any fundraising efforts to restore the gas station. I have also had people express shock that an organization like the YMCA is not more community oriented and willing to listen to the residents and officials of the community. In addition, I have had more than one person come up to me and say that they will no longer be utilizing the programs that the YMCA offers.

The Administrative Review Appeals Board voted to remand the issue back to Landmarks Commission to investigate whether or not the gas station could be moved. While this may seem to be a win-win situation, the moving of a historical structure often results in the loss of its National Register designation. With the loss of the designation, the eligibility for historic rehabilitation tax credits will also be lost. Landmarks Commission voted to adopt the criteria set forth by the National Register for moving historic properties and retaining their designation on the National Register. The first statement says, "Properties listed in the National Register should be moved only when there is no feasible alternative for preservation. When a property is moved, every effort should be made to reestablish its historic orientation, immediate setting, and general environment." As interpreted by Jim Draeger, deputy state historic preservation officer, this means that the gas station would need to be moved to a northwest

corner, in a residential neighborhood, with similar setbacks in order to retain its eligibility for the National Register. It also cannot be considered an intrusion into another historic district.

One other reason to consider the retention of the National Register designation for this property is that under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation act, the funds that Common Bond is requesting from WHEDA/HUD would be jeopardized by the destruction of a historic property. In addition, under section 106 any adverse effect on an historic property is considered when looking at actions undertaken by a federal agency and it specifically states that an adverse effect could be removal of the property from its historic location. This project has been flagged at WHEDA and HUD. Under section 106 they will be looking at National Register eligibility not at the local landmark designation. The National Register eligibility does not go away even if the Local Landmark designation is rescinded by the Administrative Review Board.

I had a retired house mover look at the structure. Because of the brick on slab construction, the bottom courses of brick would need to be removed in order to get the supporting beams underneath. The roof structures and the chimney would also need to be removed because of the overhead wires and the trees. He said the cost would be prohibitive. He estimated that the cost would be close to \$100,000 to move the structure. In addition, I have had the opportunity to talk with many of the individuals interested in saving the gas station and they want the gas station preserved on site.

When the apartment plans and PUD came before Plan Commission in December, all of the Plan Commissioners including the Mayor expressed a desire to see the gas station stay on site and be incorporated into the new development. It was expressed by one of the aldermen present that for a PUD they are asked to accept less than what is normally required and the city should get something in return. He felt that the something in return, should be the preservation of the gas station on site. Several other aldermen have expressed to our group the desire to see this building remain on site and be preserved.

This property falls within a redevelopment district. I want to point out that the redevelopment district papers state: "Historic buildings will be integrated in new development that occurs around them. When necessary historic buildings should be renovated and restored." Besides its historical significance, this is a very attractive building along the best-looking gateway into the downtown. The "alternate site plan" that was submitted to Plan Commission shows that this building can easily be integrated into the new development that is being proposed and would be quite attractive.

I looked at the plans for the apartments. The street level is parking and the community room is on the second floor overlooking the parking lot. People with disabilities tend to feel isolated and apart from the rest of the world. I can't think of anything more depressing than overlooking a parking lot. By attaching the apartments to the back of the gas station with a breezeway, the gas station could be utilized as a community room and gathering place. This would allow the residents to get down to street level and feel more like part of their environment. The garage door could be replaced with a glass paneled wall with another ADA compliant door in it. This would allow the residents to have access to the plaza and plantings in front of the gas station on the "alternate site plan". The grassy area shown

between the gas station and apartments could be turned into a healing garden. There are many garden groups within the community that would probably contribute plant material and help with the gardens. TIF funds in addition to the historic tax credits could also be utilized for this. With a little imagination the YMCA could have something very unique and special while generating a lot of good will in the community. Even if the apartments are not built the gas station can easily be incorporated into green space on the corner. People are upset when they learn that even if the apartments aren't built, the YMCA is going to tear down the gas station for a few parking spaces.

I have reviewed the quote by VJS construction for the repairs to the gas station and I believe that it can be done for far less than that. There is \$1680 to remove the vines and clean up the debris outside. I will remove the vines for free. If I remember right, they are grape vines and they are less likely than ivy to damage brick. I also can get a group together to clean up the debris outside. There was \$5850 to replace the retaining wall. If the site is being regraded and parking put in, this is unnecessary. In addition, there is \$42,000 to tuck-point the building. With historic buildings only the areas that are deteriorated should be replaced and I did not see very many areas that needed tuck-pointing. A new cedar shake roof was specified for \$9500. I have done extensive research on this building and it never had a cedar shake roof, it always had asphalt shingles. In addition, the state approves three tab shingles for its historic tax credit projects. When we wrote the letter in October, we were offering our assistance free of charge. In our group we have one person who works as a paid consultant on historic tax credit projects, she has offered her services free of charge. I had a contractor draw up an estimate for exterior work only and the quote was less than half of the cost that VJS quoted for the exterior work.

In case you do not believe that this building could draw in individuals from other communities, I want to direct you to the Chicago Tribune article "Full Service" on December 2, 2001. This article featured some of Wisconsin's restored gas stations and touted them as great destinations for day trips. I have also had the opportunity to talk to some of the members of the Society for Commercial Archaeology about the gas station. This is a national group devoted to saving early roadside architecture like gas stations and the structures that one would see along Route 66. The Bartles-Maguire gas station has been nominated to their endangered list for 2011. Many of them travel extensively to these roadside sites. I am also sending each of you a copy of a letter that was sent to the Administrative Review Board by the Wisconsin field representative for the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

As was stated in our letter in October, this is the last intact "house" style gas station in Waukesha County. I have done extensive research on this gas station and "house" style gas stations in general. There were very few "house" style gas stations in the 1970's when the intensive surveys were done on historic properties. From my research more than half of those "house" style gas stations are now gone. The Community and City officials want to see the Bartles-Maguire/Wadhams gas station remain on site and be preserved. I have had people ask me why the YMCA would disregard the wishes of the Community and the City officials and I am unable to answer that. The destruction or removal of the gas station jeopardizes the WHEDA/HUD funds under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and it could also jeopardize the TIF money that the YMCA/Common Bond is seeking. TIF money does need to go through an approval process. With the City and Community expressing a desire to preserve

the gas station, it is less likely that the YMCA/Common Bond will get its TIF money if the gas station is removed or demolished.

There are many options for the YMCA. As stated before it could sell or lease the building. There are the tax credits for historic properties available. There is the TIF money that could be utilized to restore the gas station. Also, there is the possibility that TIF money could be utilized even if the apartments are not built. There are also some paint and repair grants available through Landmarks Commission. There is the interest in fundraising to preserve this building. There may also be other grants that are available. As a group we have offered our assistance free of charge. We are offering to help with some of the work needed and also to help with fundraising. I welcome your feedback and am happy to answer any questions. I can be reached at 262-547-8364 or by e-mail at emerymary@sbcglobal.net.

Best Regards,

Mary Emery