



Suzanne S. Unger,  
President

May 8, 2020

Dear Mayor McCarthy and City Council,

Colleen Macaulay,  
Vice President

Susan DuFour,  
Treasurer

Bob Stern,  
Corresponding  
Secretary

Donna Doll,  
Recording  
Secretary

Keith Dayer,  
Director

Jasmine Roberts,  
Director

Haley Priebe,  
Director

Doug Chilton,  
Director

The construction of the new North Ferry Street Pump Station is well underway. The size and complexity of this project is becoming evident as workers remove soil and bring in heavy equipment and supplies. Paul Lafond and Mike Miller have been helpful in the past weeks as have supervisors on site. They have all been generous with their time and willing to answer our questions as they've come up. We also appreciate the biweekly updates which prepare us for what is to come.

Despite all this effort to communicate, we have hit a snag. On April 22, Earth Day, a large Silver Maple near the river, estimated to be over 100 years old, was cut down. A number of buildings shook substantially when it came down so many became aware of this as it was happening. It came as an unpleasant surprise. In fairness, the update for that week referred to removing a "60 inch diameter" tree, but it arrived only a few days before the event and neighbors did not realize it referred to this well-loved tree.

Several neighbors were particularly upset and began to explore why that tree had to come down at all. In the process, we discovered that the site plan we had been shown in 2017 was modified a year ago. To the city's credit, the modified plan sticks to the original agreement between the Stockade Association and the city to keep the new, above-ground building no more than 30 feet beyond the existing pump station fence line. However, the Stockade Association was not notified of this change until last month.

While the revision complies with our request to save as much parkland as possible, this is a significant change that will alter the appearance of the site once finished. It was also a missed opportunity. If we had been told a year ago, we could have prepared residents for this change, pointed out to them that trees would be lost and given them some time to process this information. Instead, neighbors were shocked to see that tree in particular come down, apparently without any warning, on Earth Day of all days. Some have told me they think the city is trying to hide something and pull a "bait and switch."

The Stockade Association Board believes the city is attempting to do its best to accommodate the wishes of the neighborhood and to satisfy conflicting priorities. Although the revised plans were apparently available to the public at city hall, our

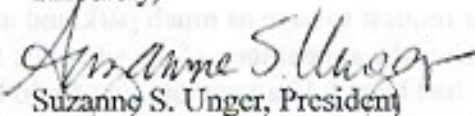


small, all-volunteer organization did not know enough to look for it and no one informed us it was available. It was our understanding that the final plans were supposed to be publicly approved. We are now in the position of trying to explain after the fact that the city did not have ulterior motives when it comes to the Pump Station and was not trying to hide the plans to cut the tree down.

This is going to be a long, difficult period for many Stockade neighbors. Houses are shaking. It's noisy. There is the constant traffic of large vehicles. All is made worse by the fact that many are home due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. In the future, please notify us as early as possible about any major changes or disruptions in the project, even if you anticipate a negative reaction, in fact, *especially* in anticipation of a negative reaction. This will give the Stockade Association Board time to prepare residents. It will be better for all concerned.

In this way, trust can be built between residents and the city and make things easier for everyone. Thank you again first, for redesigning the new pump station to preserve this part of Riverside Park and second, thank you for your efforts to keep us informed. We are looking forward to working with you on restoring the park and developing a new use for the 1913 pump station. These are things we could be working on now or in the near future. Please feel free to contact me or other board members if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

  
Suzanne S. Unger, President  
Stockade Association