

To: Common Council  
From: Ald. Taylor

## Menasha residents speak out against sidewalks in Woodland Hills



Written by

Michael King

5:55 AM, Mar. 8, 2011

MENASHA — Back in 2006, residents of the upscale Woodland Hills subdivision spoke out against city plans to route the state Friendship Trail through their development and derailed the recreational trail project.

Many of the same residents were back Monday night at a public hearing on special assessments before the Common Council because the city wants to include a five-foot concrete sidewalk along the same path when it installs the streets in the northern half of Woodland Hills and the adjacent Ribblesdale subdivision.

The neighborhood in question is in the heart of Menasha's eastside growth area.

Residents cited economic hardships, declining property values, safety concerns and littering if the sidewalks were built as proposed along the west side of Kernan Avenue and the south side of Woodland Hills Drive.

No action was taken on the final resolution for special assessments as the council agreed to hold the issue for two weeks.

"I'm very disturbed and very upset," said Mary Jane Longo, who said the sidewalks would threaten the removal or altering of significant landscaping and a circular drive in front of her Kernan Avenue home. "I don't want these people in my front yard walking."

Her husband Jim, a building contractor, said he never saw any plans that indicated a trail or sidewalk in front of his home. With nearly 500 feet of frontage, they are facing a significant cost. "I don't want it. I don't want to take care of it," he said.

"We're losing our privacy," said Lila Miller, another Kernan Avenue resident.

Greg Keil, Menasha's community development director, said the city plans have been to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facilities within major streets to promote connectivity between

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neighborhoods. Kernan Avenue is a collector street that connects on the north to Manitowoc Road, which ultimately will be reconstructed with bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

While property owners would pay for the final asphalt street and curb and gutter based on front footage, the sidewalk is to be paid via an area wide assessment of a maximum of \$750 per household.

Richard Schultz, a Woodland Hills Drive resident, said he is "not completely opposed to sidewalks" but urged delay of the sidewalk portion only for economic reasons. "We're just opposed to things being forced upon us at a time of hardship," he said.

"There's sinkholes, there's potholes," Schultz said. "It is a temporary road that was put in about 10 years ago, so it's time. Nobody wants to pay for it, but it's got to be done."

"If we can forego and put off sidewalks that dead end and go nowhere and pay for them 3-5 years from now when the streets are connected, that's what we'd like to see," Schultz said.

"I don't think it makes sense to have a sidewalk going nowhere," said Dan Ferris, a Woodland Hills Drive resident.

Prior to the public hearing, Keil said the trail "option is no longer on the table" but the city is continuing exploration of routes "on both the north and south side of State 114."

"Unless we change our policy, we're not requiring sidewalks everywhere like Appleton and some of the other Fox Cities communities do," Keil said. "But at the same time we're trying to acknowledge that there is a need to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.

"I'm scared to death what's going to happen with that Friendship Trail," said Craig Kubiak, who lives on Kernan Avenue. "We don't know when these proposed additions to connectivity might happen."

**Michael King: 920-729-6622, ext. 33, or [mking@postcrescent.com](mailto:mking@postcrescent.com)**

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*Ald. Taylor*

jam11

5:37 AM on March 8, 2011

The original plans for this development clearly stated that there was an easement for a pedestrian trail. Seems the developer either didn't represent this clearly or tried to hide this from the lot purchasers. At least this isn't put a sidewalk everywhere Appleton, where you will see a sidewalk in a small culdesac not far from here off Midway road.

isolationist

5:37 AM on March 8, 2011

I hope the city doesn't let a few loudmouthed whiners stop this sidewalk/trail plan. Good communities include safe places where a person can go for a walk or ride their bike and not have to compete with traffic. If a young parent wants to take their baby in a stroller for a walk they shouldn't have to walk in the street. As in Greenville these things were planned ahead of time so the landowners either got screwed by the developers or weren't thinking ahead.

The article states that the maximum cost would be \$750 but the man with 500ft of frontage states that he doesn't want to pay that amount. If you have that much property 750\$ either means nothing to you or you can't afford to be living there.

Different people will have different reasons against this but I for one support it. Trails like this make for good neighborhoods and good neighborhoods make for better property values.

badbob66er

6:07 AM on March 8, 2011

"I don't want these people in my front yard walking."

Sounds like Jane thinks she's too good to have the people of Menasha walking in her neighborhood. They should make it 6 feet wide... Instead of only 5.

isolationist

6:51 AM on March 8, 2011

I wish I could give you two thumbs up!

BillMenasha

7:04 AM on March 8, 2011

I wonder if she has a jockey statue on her front porching

o262

7:10 AM on March 8, 2011

Really Jane, you could always move. I am going to start running by your house, just to see what it is like.

dtucky

7:24 AM on March 8, 2011

Scared to death about the Friendship Trail? Must be nice that allowing people a safe means for exercise and recreation is the biggest thing causing you fear in life, maybe you'd be a bit friendlier and happier if you got off your rear end and used it.

Ald Taylor

MartinRiggs

8:47 AM on March 8, 2011

They should be pumped about this. I live right by a high school so it gives me the option to say, hey guys, use the side walk, not my back yard to pass through.

thinknspeak

9:40 AM on March 8, 2011

Progress is change and change is progress. We live near the "Trestle Trail" in Menasha- a welcome part of the Friendship Trail. We love seeing the families and groups of friends walking past our home all year round. Do I complain in winter about shoveling the sidewalk, so the daily "regulars" don't slip and fall? No! They are welcome faces in our community. Instead in times of illness, our neighbors will step in, making sure the block is clear all the way down the road. Mind you we live in the heart of it- one of the most highly used sections that this trail offers and we NEVER feel our privacy being invaded. Unless by losing your privacy you mean that a stranger will walk past being nice enough to wave and say hello or that they may actually tell you, if you stop to chat, just how much they love your landscaping. When did becoming a part of the world, mean we have to set ourselves apart? I would much rather see the children of our neighborhood walking safely on the sidewalk, than stumbling down the street and risk being hit by a car. I am sure that cost is not the real issue here. Instead a superiority complex perhaps is. However I do ask that for those who feel as you do, when YOU are invited to walk the Trestle Trail and pass my home, please do not look upon our gardens and admire the view- be it on a weekend when you are out with your family or for a fundraiser that works to raise money for children with cancer. Instead, face forward and think only about how much you would rather enjoy your own yard, then be near mine with the majestic beauty of blue skies, open water, billowing trees blowing in the breeze and eagles soaring overhead.

villa

11:23 AM on March 8, 2011

"I'm very disturbed and very upset," said Mary Jane Longo, who said the sidewalks would threaten the removal or altering of significant landscaping and a circular drive in front of her Kernan Avenue home. "I don't want these people in my front yard walking."

Everybody knows that part of "their" property includes an easement for something. Typically it's measurement is taken from the middle of the street - Mary Jane, if your circular drive and "significant" landscaping are placed in this area, so be it, it will be moved. That's the way it is. In regards to your comment about people in your front yard and walking, this is so typical of the "NIMBY" thought process. Not In My Back Yard - so typical today.

meandeanKK100908104250

12:38 PM on March 8, 2011

how dare they let commoners walk past MY PROPERTY !! I SHALL SUE THEM !!

Ald. Taylor

ponch37300

12:55 PM on March 8, 2011

Wow, it's a sad day when people whine about putting a nice sidewalk in thier neighborhood. I would be glad to have a trail/sidewalk going in front of my house. So this Mary Jane wants kids and adults to walk in the street where they can be hit by cars? Probably her car because she thinks she is to good and no one should be in her way when she drives. Sidewalks are a safety issue and I am proud to live in Appleton where most of the city has sidewalks that I don't have to worry about my kids playing out in the street.

Pointer26

2:28 PM on March 8, 2011

Jane says "I don't want these people in my front yard walking."

Jane does know that she doesn't own the property where the sidewalk would go, as that portion is owned by the City? So it technically isn't HER front yard.

BLKJAK

3:59 PM on March 8, 2011

Perhaps Mary Jane needs to indulge in her namesake and mellow out