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Dept of Public Works

Ronald G. Halvorsen
3444 8th Avenue
Racine, WI 53402
262-639-6824

August 31, 2007

Honorable Mayor and Common Council
City Hall
730 Washington Avenue
Racine, WI 53403

RE: Alley from Shoreland to North; Ninth Ave. to Eighth

Honorable Mayor and Common Council:

Sometime last year I contacted my alderman, Ray DeHahn, regarding the deplorable condition of this alley. At that time, I asked for some gravel and grading of this alleyway which was, and is, in very sad shape. He told me that in 2007 the city would be considering paving many of the alleys, including this one. I was delighted to hear that.

I was further delighted when I found out that the city had approved the paving following a public hearing on May 29th which I attended and spoke strongly in favor of the paving. Only one other person spoke at that time and she was opposed. However, Helen Fowler has since told me that several people had called in and said they were in favor, which would be consistent with my conversations with various neighbors.

Then my delight turned to chagrin when I heard that the city has reversed itself, apparently on the strength of a petition filed on June 8th and signed in opposition by 14 of the 22 households affected.

I know the city often (always?) goes along with the majority of homeowners on these types of matters, but I question whether that policy always results in good government. In fact, I would submit that routine acceptance of these "mini referenda" is simply avoidance of decision making by the city fathers. While I understand that many citizens do not want to pay for certain services, I don't think they should be allowed to overrule good government.

As for the alley itself, this alley would be an embarrassment to a small town in Mississippi much less an "All American" city like Racine. There are currently 63 potholes and many long ruts in this one block stretch and, as I stated at the hearing, the dust and mud are such that it has become a serious "quality of life" issue for homeowners (read taxpayers) including, I dare say, those who don't want to spend the money to fix it.

Now I hear that the city has decided not to maintain these alleys all. I'm not sure what that means but for those of us taxpayers (read voters) who have garages accessible only from the alleys, this would relegate us to second class citizens.

I respectfully request that the city reinstate its original decision and put this paving project back on schedule for 2008 – for the good of the city and the general population.

I would be happy to meet with the mayor, the committee or the entire council for any further discussion you may wish to have on this matter.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Halvorsen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ronald G. Halvorsen.