Historic Water Tower Neighborhood

Milwaukee Board of Zoning Appeals
809 North Broadway
Milwaukee, WI 53202

RE: 2950 N. Shepard Ave. and 2628 E. Newberry Blvd.

September 26, 2013

Dear Board of Zoning Appeals:

The Board of Trustees of Historic Water Tower Neighborhood (HWTN) voted unanimously Sept. 4, 2013, to take the following position related to the two above properties:

> "The HWTN opposes illegal non-residential uses in the neighborhood, opposes the property owner and operator continuing the present use of the properties on Shepard and Newberry as commercial hotels, and supports the City's actions to stop the illegal uses. We authorize the Executive Committee to communicate our position to BOZA."

Historic Water Tower Neighborhood, an organization representing more than 300 dues-paying area residents, was founded 40 years ago for "the preservation and enhancement of the unique residential character of the neighborhood." Our neighborhood boundaries encompass a quiet, family-friendly, largely owner-occupied area almost entirely of residences and includes the largest grouping of historic homes in Wisconsin. More than 1,000 homes and condos within our boundaries are 75 years old or older, and more than 580 of these are over 100 years old. The majority of homes in our area are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Short-term rentals of homes, including the above properties on N. Shepard Avenue and E. Newberry Boulevard, will destroy the residential character of our neighborhood. Such rentals already are causing higher levels of noise, trash, traffic, parking and late-night outdoor activity in our residential neighborhood. If they are allowed to continue, these rentals will lower residential property values, increase crime and encourage even more commercial ventures in homes on residential blocks. Allowing such rentals to continue would establish a precedent for a new, illegal and unintended use in our residential area.

The Northeast Side Plan that the Common Council adopted Sept. 1, 2009, and which sets the city's current vision for our area, does not allow or intend for such uses and explicitly speaks against them by:

- Finding that commercial activity should "not encroach or expand into residential areas." (p. 204)
- Encouraging the city to "consider zoning restrictions that would limit the number of non-owner-occupied housing units." (p. 205)
- Recommending that the city "improve overall neighborhood stability by increasing owner-occupied housing" (and) "code enforcement for building violations and enforce nuisance control measures, including restricting multifamily conversions and enforcing occupancy limits." (p. 204)

We agree with Ald. Nik Kovac and the Department of Neighborhood Services that Milwaukee's zoning code currently prohibits such rentals, and that the code should be strictly enforced related to 2950 N. Shepard Ave. and 2628 E. Newberry Blvd.

We strongly urge the Board of Zoning Appeals to take all possible actions to prevent short-term rentals and similar uses at 2950 N. Shepard Ave., 2628 E. Newberry Blvd. and anywhere else in our neighborhood and to support Milwaukee residents and neighborhoods in maintaining our current quality of life.

Sincerely,

Dawn McCarthy, HWTN Secretary
On Behalf of the HWTN Executive Committee

c: Ald. Nik Kovac
Mayor Tom Barrett
Art Dahlberg, Milwaukee Department of Neighborhood Services Commissioner