

11827 Saskatchewan Drive
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
September 20, 1972

Mr. Walters
Town Hall, Willow St.
Guilderland, N. Y. 12084

Dear Mr. Walters:

Word has just reached us of the Town Meeting on Tuesday, September 12. As you may know, we are very interested in the outcomes of the Rissacher and Harff cases as it is our home at 3 Parkwood St. which borders the backs of their properties.

We would like to make clear why it is that we object to the Rissacher property continuing to be used in the illegal way it has recently been used, and to either that property or Harff's being rezoned for business.

With respect to Rissacher's property, we feel that it is presently, in violation of town laws and, ~~destructive~~ ^{destructive} of the residential character of the neighborhood and thus of the value of our property in the following ways:

1. Rissacher does not live there.
2. Rissacher rents much of the premisses to groups of transients who naturally take no more care of the property than he does. He rents to one student, who gets in others to share the rent (close to \$300. a month, we understand), in effect creating a transient boarding house.
3. Adequate garbage cans are not provided at the property; the lawns are rarely mowed; piles of debris are allowed to accumulate and blow around the neighborhood; the house has not been painted in years; old sofas are left to decay on the front porch; rats have been seen on the premisses a number of times, about which neighbors have called the town. The general look of the place is, to say the least, detrimental to the otherwise well-kept residential character of the neighborhood.
4. The traffic from Rissacher's patients is excessive for the facilities available:
 - A. The alley between Parkwood and Glenwood on which his patient parking lot is located is a narrow, one-lane, unpaved

"road". The Town does not maintain this "road"; for instance, it is not plowed by the town in winter. (Some of us oil this alley in summer to keep down the dust; others plow it in winter so we can get our cars out; Rissacher takes no share in keeping it up though he and his patients give it heaviest use. This "road" is not, incidentally, owned by those who border it.) Except for Rissacher's patients, it is used only as an access-way to garages and as a pedestrian way for neighbors--including many small children and elderly people--to avoid the dangerous traffic so close to the pedestrian path on Western Avenue. This last function is especially important in winter when there is no pedestrian path at all on Western Avenue. Rissacher's patients' traffic creates a grave danger to both pedestrians and to residents-in-cars using this one-lane dirt "road".

B. Rissacher's property has only a small backyard, not at all adequate to accommodate a parking lot for his patients (not to mention for his lodgers). It is neither deep enough nor wide enough to accommodate more than three cars at one time. When he has office hours, there are frequently four, five, and six cars jockeying around at once in the alley. We have found his patients parking in front of our garage several times, and sitting "idling" right in the alley when the available spots are full, thereby blocking residents' access to their garages. We had to put up a privacy fence along the alley in order to be able to keep the garbage, rats, and dust from Rissacher's operation out of our yard, and in order to have any privacy at all. One of Rissacher's clients went through the fence while trying to back out of the parking lot one month later. We don't see how such accidents can be avoided in the future if Rissacher keeps this kind of operation there, nor why we should have to put up with it.

In conclusion with respect to Rissacher's property, our feeling is that no one who lived there would put up with the situation he has there. Residing at the other end of the street, as he does, he can afford not to care that the property is a suburban slum.

With respect to the Harff property, we find no reason to think that Harff or any later owner is not going to create more of the same sorts of problems. The house has been rebuilt so that no family could live there, and it is known around the neighborhood that he was soliciting renters for the second floor apartment. His traffic problem will be insoluble and just added on to the misery we already have because of Rissacher's patients.

I don't know if it came up at either meeting, but in the first eight houses on Parkwood St. there are at least eleven children who are fifteen years old or younger: we have 2, Bennisons have 3, Davids have 3, and Perlees have 3. These children naturally congregate in the front yards and in the vacant lot across the street from the spot where the alley intersects Parkwood St., and they attract other children to the area. It is not uncommon to see ten to twenty children playing baseball and basketball there after school and all day during the summer. It is difficult to see how we could live with another business and its traffic right there.

In conclusion, we think the situation intolerable right now even before the Harff property is being used for a business, and we don't understand how rezoning "solves" anything. We also don't understand why this bad practice of spot rezoning is being considered, and we think the Town should consider if it can collect taxes from businesses such as Rissacher's to which it does not maintain any access ways.

We bought our home in Guilderland in this neighborhood because we thought it one of the finest in the Albany area. We hope Guilderland will decide to keep this one of its finest residential neighborhoods by leaving the zoning as it is and by requiring Rissacher and Harff to comply with these zoning laws which are an expression of the wishes of the residents of the area.

Sincerely yours,

Sandra and Harold Morick

cc: Melvyn Behn

P.S. We were surprised to hear that the Harff case had come up in August; I phoned the Town offices in July to protest such a hearing being held when much of the neighborhood was away on vacation. I was assured that the August hearing was merely a formality; that Harff's case would be postponed so as to come up with the rest in September. I would be interested to learn why it was that Harff's case did not come up with the rest in view of this assurance I was given.