

To Brenda Hall and the Members of the Norman City Council:

We, Jeff Murphy and Li Yang, residing at 322 Alameda Street, wish to appeal a decision made by Norman's Historic Commission. Their decision regards seventeen vinyl windows that were purchased in September of 2012 at a cost of \$4,430.36. Fifteen of which were installed in October of the same year for \$1500.00. Two had yet to be installed behind a wall cabinet location that I was going to remove at a later date when I could afford the cost. The Commission stipulates that three of these windows must be replaced with acceptable ones within a year and the remaining twelve within a three year period.

My wife and I are requesting leniency from the Council due to the extenuating circumstances of this situation. In April of 2012 we wished to purchase a home for approximately \$100,000 conveniently located near the University of Oklahoma after renting in Oklahoma City for two years near Oklahoma City Community College. We were recommended a Norman-based realtor by a professor at OCCC because we were relatively new to the state and did not know the area at all. We were shown our current home by our realtor. The seller is a realtor that by coincidence worked out of the same office as our realtor. At no point in time from the first moment I entered the property through inspections, closing and until the violation letter did we ever receive any disclosure either verbal or documented of Historic Zoning. My realtor even recommended the home would have more "pop" with vinyl siding.

In May of 2013, we received notice of being in violation of an ordinance due to the vinyl window installation. We were so confused by this because so many homes around us have both vinyl and aluminum windows, vinyl and aluminum siding, asphalt shingles, aluminum gutters and downspouts. I immediately phoned the City of Norman office and Mrs. Susan Atkinson met us at our home bringing a very professionally created spiral-bound Historic Preservation Handbook. My first thought was, "Why did I not receive a copy of this earlier?" The fact was brought up that there is an occasional small decorative "Miller Historic District" sign on some seemingly random telephone poles. However, it signals nothing about ordinances, zoning or the existence of a Historic Commission.

We attended the Historic Commission meetings on July 1st and August 5th. I understand their interest in preserving the history but not to have a pro-active information dissemination plan is a major omission and negatively impacts community inclusiveness. Because of this omission the original windows are a loss to the area the Commission is trying to preserve and created an unnecessary situation. It is so easy to get online, find a site like Zillow and glance over a map with flags of the homes in these two small areas that are for sale or recently sold. The sale date is part of the information. With a nine member Commission, why is it not possible to have critical information out in these relatively small areas? A flyer or postcard is a suggestion. The neighbors agree that there needs to be some type of notice. I brought this to the Commission's attention but it was not addressed at all. The Commission Head said that this type of situation has happened in the past. I have heard of two recent situations involving similar circumstances with regards to a garage door and a storm door.

Our current financial situation is not well-moneyed. Our net job income last year was around \$38,500 even with substantial overtime hours. I have been furloughed every Friday beginning July 12 and will have at least one more day this fiscal year. I will not make as much as 2012. My employer has

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commented on possible lay-offs and/or more furlough days for next fiscal year if sequestration continues.

Li is a non-traditional, long-term, full-time Professional Physics student with at least another five years of full-time study. We only qualify for high interest unsubsidized student loans that we have been able to avoid thus far with considerable sacrifice. We paid about \$9000 for her first year at OU for tuition, fees and books. We had built up substantial savings during our two years of renting but with the home purchase, cost of the windows and a few pieces of furniture our income is mostly dedicated to tuition and the expenses of our existence.

We are pleading for a less burdensome remedy to comply with the ordinance. Li and I need some time and possible expenditure to pursue a claim against the seller for our loss of the vinyl window purchase and installation charges. We are asking that we are allowed six years to replace the windows. The wood window total would be around \$10,000 or more. Li and I also request that we are able to save enough money to purchase all at once to avoid the potential for mismatched windows due to manufacturer and/or supplier changes/discontinuations over the time period. Some members on the Commission said that doing the work in segments would raise my costs for contractor fees.

Li and I consider ourselves good neighbors, hard workers, and highly responsible tax paying citizens who wish to live a peaceful life. We thank you in advance for your careful consideration and decision. It is a decision that will have a significant impact on us.

Sincerely,

Li Yang 08/11/2013
Jeff Murphy 08/11/2013

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