

September 7, 2017

To: Municipal Services Committee

From: Steve Evans, Building owner
330 W College Avenue
Appleton, WI

I am writing to share important background information relating to the alley topic (300 block of West College Avenue, north alley) to be discussed at the September 11 Municipal Services Committee, as well as – in the spirit of collaboration and compromise – express my support of either Option B or C in the Department of Public Works recommendation of August 31, 2017.

Our intent all along has been to find a workable solution for all businesses, as opposed to simply asking the City to enforce the existing understandings and regulations for the alley, which would, essentially, restrict any unattended loading/unloading in the alley during the day hours. We believe finding a solution such as Option B or C is more than reasonable on our part considering the current more prohibitive guidelines that are not being enforced (as contained in the building variance letter from the State of Wisconsin Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations dated April 16, 1993).

As a building owner/developer, it's my belief that alleys like this one are primarily public right of ways in which vehicle passage should not be constrained, particularly from a safety perspective. We have included photos with this communication to show where the blockage that has occurred not only causes major inconveniences for our customers, which we've documented and shared previously, but also can become significant safety concerns.

(Background: As has been noted, all of the alleys on the north side of W College are 20-foot right of ways, with one exception. The 300-block alley is the only one with less than 20 feet of usable width, meaning this alley is the only one in which there is not sufficient width to allow for a vehicle to pass if a truck is loading/unloading. This occurred because, as a part of the parking ramp project, a 3-foot sidewalk was built within the right of way; also, this stretch of alley is the only north side one in which dumpsters are placed within the right of way, further reducing the useable width.)

When I developed the 330 W. College Ave. building 20 years ago – opting to stay downtown and move from what is now the Chamber building – having those eight on-site customer parking spots was the most important priority in deciding to build and expand within downtown Appleton, as the office does many transactions each day with customers who use those spots. In addition, I wanted to build an attractive building in a highly visible block as an important enhancement to our central business district. In this regard, we also provided a special urban oasis in the form of our plaza, which is enjoyed by many, both day and evening.

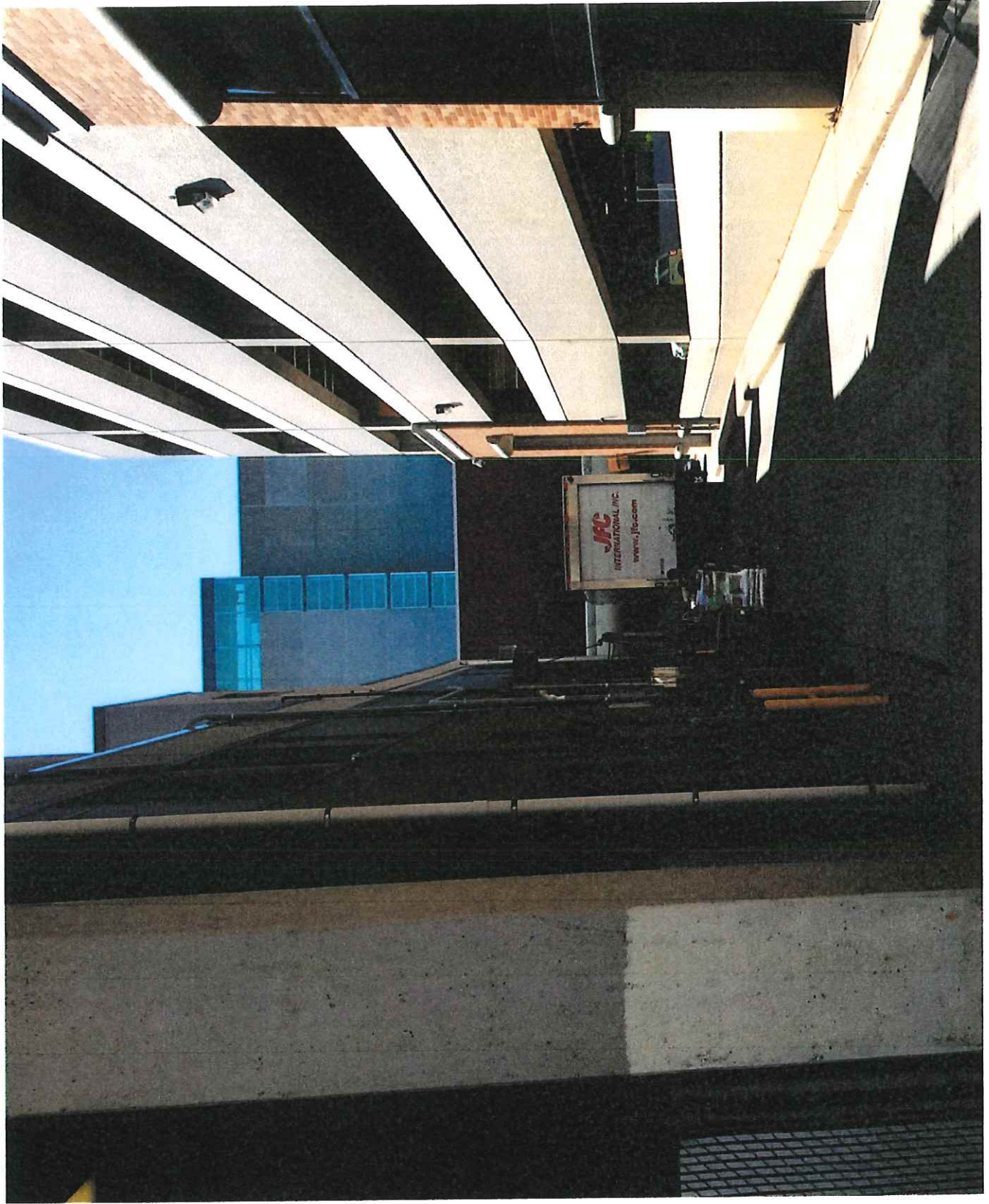
First American Title, the major tenant in our building and the holder of those eight parking spots, has called downtown Appleton home for 167 years (1850) and would like to continue to do so. However, I have been informed by First American that the ability to access and use its existing on-site customer parking is critical to a lease renewal. The use of this on-site parking predates each of the current occupants of the 300 block. First American will not consider commencing lease renewal discussions until this access issue is solved. In the first 18 years at this location, alley access was not an issue. For the last 2-3 years, customer access has been denied multiple times a day on a weekly basis. Often-times, those parked on-site have found themselves trapped – unable to exit either end of the alley. Imagine the frustration of a realtor, lender, attorney or home buyer leaving a closing only to find themselves unable to make their next appointment because of the alley being blocked at each end.

As stressed earlier, both First American and I want to find a solution that keeps them in downtown yet can be workable for all. Subsequent to your August 21 meeting, we met to explore possible alternatives. We submitted the following for consideration (current Options B and C are similar):

- alley restricted to only one vehicle loading/unloading at a time;
- if loading/unloading to take more than 15 minutes, it cannot be done in the alley;
- creation of a Division St. loading zone to allow for delivery vehicles to either load/unload or to wait in queue until the alley clears; maintain only one College Avenue 15-minute unmetered space (there are presently two with the right to have three);
- placement of signage on the Division Street ramp exterior indicating First American parking on the first floor.

We believe a workable solution is possible and we thank you for your consideration.

Steve Evans



Sent from my iPhone

FAFLD





Sent from my iPhone