

SUPPORT FOR HISTORIC AND NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION

October 1979; Revised April, 1988.

The League of Women Voters of Janesville feels that preservation is important to the future of Janesville. The City has definite role in preservation. Preservation should be integrated into the overall process of planning for community development. Plans for streets, schools, and other community facilities should be evaluated for their impact on historic resources. Zoning changes and/or variances should be evaluated in terms of their effect on the neighborhood and historic resources.

The City of Janesville is an entitlement community under the federal Community Development Block Grant Program. These funds should be used to support neighborhood goals, for rehabilitation that is appropriate to the building, and along with private involvement to undertake a survey of the historic resources of the city. Alternative housing should be made available for those who might be displaced by rehabilitation activities. In addition, re-use of historic building should be a major consideration in all redevelopment projects.

The league feels that the City of Janesville should adopt an historic district ordinance and appoint an historic preservation commission. This would allow interested property owners to take advantage of the various tax incentives for preservation. The neighborhood should be involved in the definition of historic district boundaries.

The city should also

1. publicize the tax incentives which are available;
2. encourage property owners to find alternatives to the destruction of historic buildings;
3. re-evaluate existing city ordinances for their affect on historic structures;
4. require that new construction in historic areas be compatible with the area;
5. require that renovation of historic structures and those in historic districts be in keeping with the style of the buildings;
6. allow variances to the ordinances to encourage the re-use of historic buildings;
7. make sure that the assessment of historic properties reflects their lower fair market value because of the lower potential for development;
8. enforce the existing building codes so that historic structures do not deteriorate because of neglect.