
MEMORANDUM

Public Works Department – City of Middleton

DATE: Nov. 1, 2004
TO: Mike Davis, City Administrator
FROM: Shawn Stauske, City Engineer
SUBJECT: **Unauthorized Barbed Wire, Electric Lights, Sign in right-of-way**

At about 12:30 p.m. on November 1, 2004, I received a phone call from a concerned citizen informing me that a political sign had been installed in a tree, extension cords had been run to power spotlights, and the base of the tree was wrapped with barbed wire. The caller believed that the sign, electric wire and lights, and barbed wire were all within the public right-of-way of Overlook Pass. In response to the call, Mark Opitz and I went to the intersection of Overlook Pass and Thorstrand Rd. to review the situation.

Mark and I found that a political sign had been affixed to a tree on the north side of the intersection of Overlook Pass with Thorstrand Rd. A few spot lights (the type that are ground-mounted using a plastic spike) and an extension cord were laying near the base of the tree. The tree and surrounding area were covered with loose coils of barbed wire. Based on mapping from the City of Middleton and City of Madison, it was apparent that the materials were all within the public right-of-way of Overlook Pass. It was my impression that the electric wire and barbed wire posed a potential public safety hazard.

Mark and I traced back along the extension cords, and found that the cord led to the porch of 1810 Thorstrand Rd. At about 1:30 p.m., I rang the doorbell, which was answered by a woman who identified herself as Carol Skorupan. I requested that she remove the barbed wire and electrical wires from the public right-of-way by the end of the day today. She informed me that she believed the sign, lights and barbed wire were all on her private property. After telling her that the records of both the City of Middleton and the City of Madison clearly showed this area as Overlook Pass right-of-way, Mrs. Skorupan agreed that she would make sure the barbed wire and electric wire were removed by the end of the day today. She will also make sure that the political sign is removed by the end of the day tomorrow (11-2-04). Mrs. Skorupan also acknowledged that she would be responsible for any injuries that might be caused due to her placement of the barbed wire and/or electric wire.

Mrs. Skorupan followed Mark and me back to the intersection of Overlook Pass and Thorstrand Rd., and I gave her a copy of a map I had received from the City of Madison. The map consists of an aerial photograph of the area, with right-of-way lines superimposed.

cc: Brad Keil, Chief of Police
Mark Opitz, Asst. City Planner

CITY OF MIDDLETON
7426 HUBBARD AVENUE - MIDDLETON, WI 53562
ph. (608)827-1081 fax (608)827-1080 sstauske@ci.middleton.wi.us