

Columbia Missourian

Broadway widening upsets resident

The City Council will discuss a disputed subdivision again.

By **LINDSAY TOLER**

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In front of Frank Jindra's house, West Broadway is no more than a one-lane gravel road that dead ends at a chain padlocked between a steel post and an old pine tree. Heading back toward town, the road takes a sharp left and quick right before leading drivers up a steep, blind hill.

Across Broadway, acres of rolling green field stretch back to the tree-lined horizon. Jindra looked out the window of the car and sighed.

"I'm going to miss all this," he said.



Frank Jindra is unhappy that his front yard could be cut into because of a plan being discussed by the City Council that would widen West Broadway to make room for a proposed subdivision. (WM. SRITE/Missourian)

If a resolution passes at tonight's City Council meeting, the land will be developed into a 141-home subdivision called The Overlook. The small gravel road will be widened, paved and extended, and Jindra's dreams for a big front lawn will no longer be possible.

It was nearing midnight when the plans for The Overlook were presented for approval at the council meeting Feb. 5. The council seemed ready to vote in favor of the resolution when Jindra got up to speak. He began with a plea.

"How do I get heard?" Jindra asked repeatedly. "I've been asking for a long time."

He explained that if it were paved the way the plans showed, the new expanded Broadway would run right along his front yard. The road is already dangerously curvy, Jindra explained.

"If someone falls asleep (while driving on Broadway), they are going to be right in my living room," he told the council. "I've pleaded with you all to go take a little ride down Broadway. It's a dangerous road."

He said it would be safer for drivers and for those already living in the area if developers straightened Broadway rather than paving the road where it curves south toward Jindra's property.

"Get Broadway away from my front yard," Jindra said. He sat down and waited to hear the final decision.

The council sat in silence. Some flipped through their notebooks while others looked at the map Jindra had submitted showing what Broadway would look like if it were straightened. Zach Thomas, a civil engineer from Engineering Surveys and Services, approached the council offering to answer any questions. He said the developers did not plan on changing the road's path.

"West Broadway is going to remain as it is shown," Thomas told them.

The council was mostly silent for about 10 minutes. Occasionally, a council member would ask a question about maintaining the area's natural character. Others would attempt to comment on the injustice they believed the plan would commit against Jindra, but the comments never amounted to much discussion.

"It does seem like there's injustice to me," Mayor Darwin Hindman commented occasionally. "There's something wrong about it."

Head nods showed others on the council agreed.

Finally, the council proposed to table the resolution. Hindman said that passing it would mean "sealing the fate" of Jindra and his property. The same resolution will be presented again at tonight's meeting.

Jindra said he first became concerned about Broadway's route in 2002 when Columbia was considering annexing the area into the city limits.

"They had (the road straightened) on their plat, and when I saw it I was really happy," Jindra said. But when the preliminary plat for The Overlook development came out in 2006 and Jindra saw the plans for West Broadway, "I said, 'Whoa!'"

The plat, drawn by Engineering Surveys and Services, shows 55 feet of land set aside in the Bellwood development to the north for the expansion of the current West Broadway into a two-lane residential road.

"It wouldn't be dramatically widened," said Tim Teddy, director of the department of planning and development. "One hundred forty lots alone doesn't require a four-lane highway put in there."

However, if the current plan is approved and if Broadway is ever extended west to meet State Route UU to connect with Interstate 70, the road could be widened, having a significant impact on Jindra's front yard, Teddy said.

"The right of way could possibly take up a large portion (of the yard)," Teddy said. "And there's two houses like it to the east."

Teddy called the issue a "design problem" and said that Public Works would be responsible for examining the impact Broadway's development would have on residents now and in the future.

Sixth Ward Councilwoman Barbra Hoppe called expanding Broadway into Jindra's lawn "adding insult to injury."

"We all were looking at a fundamental injustice," she said. "In a situation like this, if a road in the future needs to be extended because of new developments, the land that is taken up for the road should be in new development's property rather than in a previous owner's front yard."

She said she was encouraged that Jindra came out and made his voice heard.

"He made a big impact," Hoppe said. "To me, it's encouraging as an exercise in good democracy. People can get up in front of the council and be listened to and thoughtfully responded to. That's exactly what you want as a council."

Jindra said he will continue to ask the council to "make it back the way it was."

When Jindra moved to Columbia in 1993 with his then-wife Teresa and his young children Jason and Sabrina, he loved his house on West Broadway because it was across the creek from Christian Fellowship Church. During the day, the kids could play on the playground, and on Sunday mornings, and even some Friday nights, the family could attend worship.

"For a date, I'd take (my wife) out to eat and go to church," Jindra said.

But getting the kids to the church's playground proved to be harder than Frank thought. First, the kids had to get across the creek and up the steep hill along its shore.

"It's not close," Jindra said.

To make it easier, he built a small wooden bridge over the creek.

"It's nothing fancy," Jindra said while laughing. "They just like to go over. All the kids around here go over there to that little park."

But if 141 new homes are built across the road, Jindra wonders if there will be room for more playgrounds and recreational areas.

"What are these little kids supposed to do when they move in there?" he asked. "There's no place for them to play."

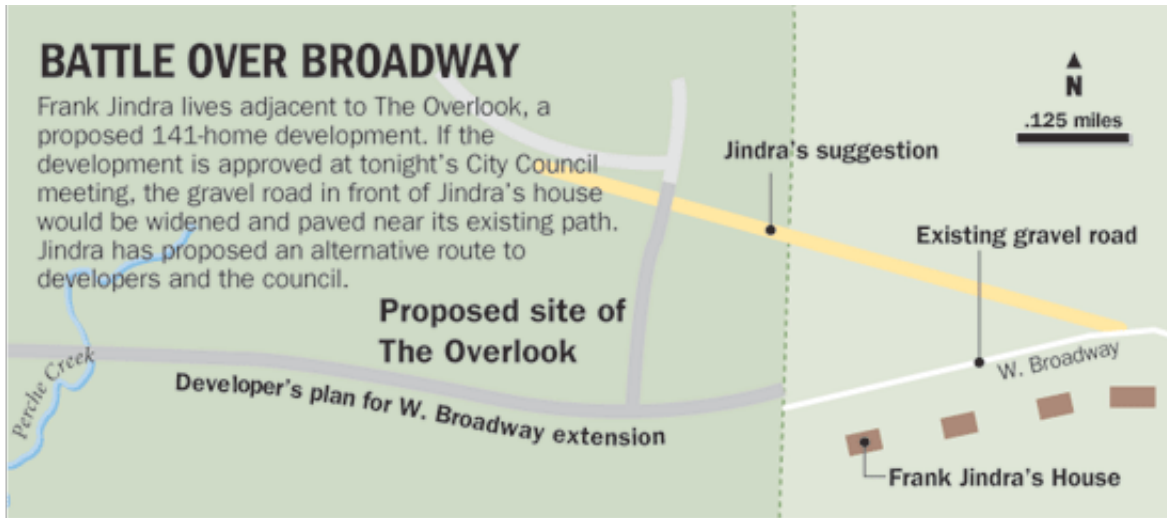
Jindra's kids are grown now, but he keeps up the bridge for people in the area.

"I put lights on it so you could see at night," he said, pointing to the bridge from the window of his office where he works as an electrician for County Electric and Refrigeration Services.

If the developers shift the road away from his yard, Jindra said he'd try to buy the land and turn the area into a front yard.

"I want to take it up if I've got to do it myself," he said. "Let me make my front yard and my house nice and neat."

"I was here first."



Sources: City of Columbia; Frank Jindra

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