

June 11, 2013

To:	Mr. Bob Livingston, University Park, City Manager
From:	The Schreyer Family 3301 Colgate Ave., University Park

RE: Basketball hoop

Dear Mr. Livingston and esteemed City Council,

Our family has lived in University Park for just under two years, after moving here from our hometown of Cincinnati, Ohio. We chose this community for its family appeal, excellent schools, and beautiful homes and parks.

We are proud to be part of this community. We paid a premium price for our home, simply because it is in University Park, and we believe it's worth the investment. It's certainly our desire to protect this investment with care and attention to detail; to ensure our home, like others, maintains standards, and also to protect our children's safety.

On June 8, 2013, we received a letter in the mail stating that we are in violation of a Zoning Ordinance. The code violation states, *basketball net placed in the front drive will need to be removed. Only freestanding nets are allowed.* We were also directed to Section 21-22 of the Zoning Ordinance, which makes no specific mention of basketball hoops and does not, with clarity, provide guidance or appropriateness of such a piece of sporting equipment.

With that in mind, our family researched basketball hoops. We found that there are three categories of hoops:

1. **Portable** – a basketball goal with a large plastic or fiberglass base, which is typically filled with at least 50 gallons of sand or water for added stability. Some units include wheels, which may be helpful for movement, only after all water and sand has been removed, thus decreasing the weight to a “moveable” number of pounds.
2. **Permanent** – a basketball goal that requires a large hole to be dug, in which concrete is poured around a metal pole structure to support the hoop. Because the concrete is poured directly around the pole, it requires concrete to be broken and removed in order to also remove the basketball hoop.
3. **Replaceable** – a concrete base is poured into a hole dug into the ground. On top of the flat base is a metal plate that is affixed to the concrete, also laying flat. A basketball pole and hoop (in one structure) are bolted to the metal plate with four large bolts. The benefit of this category of hoop is that when the hoop becomes old, outdated, broken or no longer used, it can easily be removed from the plate by loosening the four bolts. A new and improved basketball goal can be affixed to the same plate, or the plate can simply remain flat on the ground without anything.

I have attached a photo of our current basketball goal, which is replaceable. I have also included a close up view of the base.



This basketball hoop is one of the highest-quality hoops made. It has great technology, as well as a sleek and professional appearance. Not only that, but it is a SAFE option for our children and their friends. The backboard is shatter-proof, and the pole, because of how it's secured, cannot be pulled over and topple them.

Through research and conversations with several City employees, it has been explained to me that only a fully portable basketball hoop is compliant with City regulations. Below is a photo of the comparable basketball hoop, which would meet the City's guidelines.



As previously stated, this goal has a 50-gallon base, which the manufacturer recommends filling with either water or sand. If the base was filled as the manufacturer suggests for safety, *the base alone* would weigh 417 pounds if filled with water, and 625 pounds if filled with sand. Either of these options render a “portable” hoop rather un-portable in the end.

Without a properly filled base (and even WITH the base filled) all portable hoops bring with them the risk of tipping, either in severe weather conditions or with the weight of kids attempting to dunk a basketball.

Our current situation:

Today, in our spacious circular drive, our hoop is installed on the side of the driveway, closer to our house than the road. Neighborhood kids gather to play and get healthy exercise while improving athletic skills. We have never received one complaint.

In addition, upon requesting feedback from the neighbors on our block, we have received **nothing** but support for our current basketball goal. Following are just some of the comments, which they were happy to share:

I really prefer your basketball goal that is currently there and not a replacement temporary goal that is much more unsightly than the professional goal you have. Your goal is removable and I believe the ordinance needs to be updated to represent the current technology. And I have the direct view of your driveway from 3232 Colgate, not looking forward to a replacement ugly goal. I hope the ordinance can be updated. Thank you, Bridey Meinecke

Ironically a friend and I were discussing how wonderful it was to see the kids on the block playing in their yards as we did when we were young. The basketball goal is very tastefully done and MUCH better looking than the plastic portable ones. You've our vote. Mary Markham

Your basketball goal is far from an eyesore! The Welp family is in favor of it 100%. I think the argument could be made that yours is just as portable as a goal that is labeled portable! Betsy Welp

The Lucas family thinks it looks great! It is nice to have young children in the neighborhood playing outdoors again. We are all for it!! Randy Lucas (Directly facing our house)

We prefer what you have! I think it looks great. Tia and Sam Pettijohn (directly next-door)

It looks FAR better the way you have it now!! (Tasteful and clean). Stephanie Linder

We support you! Let's keep our HOME court. Mary Beth and Sean Duffy

The dilemma:

According to what's been explained to me about the current ordinance, our only option would be to replace this basketball hoop (which is safe, tasteful and acceptable to all of our neighbors) with a comparable portable hoop that is bulkier, less attractive, and perhaps just as un-portable, given the manufacturer's recommended guidelines for safety.

The letter notifying us of our code violation stated that our cooperation is appreciated to make University Park *a healthier, safer and more beautiful place in which to live*. The problem is that a portable basketball hoop helps to achieve none of those things. It's not healthier or safer, due to the risk of instability and injury. It's most certainly not more beautiful either, given the size, design and materials used. If the City's desire is truly to achieve these elements, then consideration for a replaceable hoop, which meets these criteria, should be an option.

Our recommendation (which is a WIN for all!)

We would like to propose that this City ordinance be amended to allow for replaceable basketball goals in front driveways. Because we, too, want to maintain our high standards and ensure that we keep our City beautiful, we would also propose the following details:

- Basketball hoops cannot include a pole that is surrounded by poured concrete; rather, it must include either a fully portable or semi-permanent base that can allow for removal and/or replacement.
- Replaceable goal base mounts must be either flush with the ground or no more than two inches above the ground.
- The basketball goal must be regularly maintained, just as the home. Upkeep should be consistent and the metal can show no signs of rust.
- Basketball nets must be attached, not broken or hanging irregularly.
- Goal backboards must be made of clear material and shatter resistant. Any sign of shattering or cracking will require a new backboard installation.
- The goal should be functionally operational and standing fully upright.

We believe the above recommendations will provide the best options for a safe and beautiful home basketball solution for the families of University Park. We feel strongly that this should be accepted, due to the number of families that live in and are drawn to our community for the family environment and superb schools. This solution maintains community standards and encourages healthy activity among residents.

The alternative, again, is a replacement of this sleek and safe design with a "compliant" hoop that is larger, not-as-safe, and not the preference of anyone who sees the hoop on a daily basis.

A replaceable basketball hoop is a very reasonable solution and allows everyone in the community to win. We ask that you consider amending this Ordinance and save the future of "home court" basketball in our beloved City.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Schreyer, on behalf of the entire Schreyer family