

**From:** [Kristen Slack](#)  
**To:** [Furman, Keith](#)  
**Cc:** [council](#); [Mayor](#); [Transportation Commission](#); [Wolfe, James](#); [Tom Kneubuehl](#); [Roy Christianson](#); [Erik Infield](#); [Faith Fitzpatrick](#); [Herman Felstehausen](#); [Jana Stewart](#); [Leslie Herje](#); [Matt Seib](#); [Stewart Ellison](#); [springharborpresident@gmail.com](#); [ssmiley1@charter.net](#); [Joan Martin](#); [Mary Beth Dunning](#); [Janet Loewi](#); [Liz Freitag](#); [Tanya Cunningham](#); [ITALINK1@charter.net](#); [5121minocqua@gmail.com](#); [stanfuka@gmail.com](#); [Cc: From: Angela Young](#); [To: Steve Tiffany](#); [Maureen Rickman](#); [Pat McBride](#); [Agneta Sarinske](#); [Carol Michalski](#); [Kathy Goldsworthy](#); [Sarah spencer](#); [msundquist20@gmail.com](#); [Herman Baumann](#); [jeff.prey@gmail.com](#); [Alice Erickson](#); [Kim McBride](#); [Heather Crade](#); [Mark Redsten](#); [Peggy Scallon](#); [Beth Bauer](#); [Chuck & Candy Gates/Schrank](#); [Linda/Rob Nelson](#); [Patricia Boyette](#); [Sandra Larson](#); [Kate and Dave Fberhard](#); [Kate and Dave Fberhard](#); [Marie Dietrich](#); [Kim McBride](#); [emetzloff@yahoo.com](#); [Patrice Kennedy](#); [LISA A STEINKAMP](#); [Derrick Buisch](#); [King Aymond](#); [tomasz Zal](#); [Kay Schwichtenberg](#); [Catherine Martin](#); [Marie Dietrich](#); [lesaboat@charter.net](#); [Jeff Bauer](#); [Nicholas Garton](#)  
**Subject:** Response to Keith Furman's 3/28 blog post  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 29, 2022 8:24:14 AM

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I am resending this to provide a new subject line, and I corrected a couple of typos.

I read your recent blog post with great interest, Keith, and feel compelled to speak up. A few reactions:

1. Your approach to gathering input from your constituents about this project has been passive at best and lazy at worst. An initial blog post about the project, put up after contracted surveyors were already in the neighborhood and residents were having to ask them questions about the project, is not the way good communication starts. It has only gotten worse from there.
2. There are many residents in the neighborhood who will not communicate directly with you because they feel bullied and intimidated. I find that infuriating and heartbreaking, given that you are our representative to the City and hold a position of power and influence. Trying to intimidate residents by reporting their yard signs to the City is another example of this kind of behavior. And if Council members would like examples of the tenor of our alder's communications with residents, please do let me know.
3. Keith, you have deliberately tried to paint a negative picture of residents who express legitimate concerns about the environmental impacts of this project and about the need for specific infrastructure elements. Your behavior at the 1/12/22 Transportation Commission meeting was underhanded and deceptive. You certainly broke my trust in that meeting, and I know that was the case for many others.
4. The only entity that has bothered to systematically gather information from neighborhood residents about the LMD project is the Planning and Development Committee of the SHNA. Importantly, that effort included questions that were specific to those with mobility limitations, those age 70 and over, and those with younger children. Neither you nor anyone from the City attempted to systematically gather information from these groups or the residents in general, instead presuming what these groups wanted and needed. The clear majority of people in the first two groups do not want sidewalks at all, and among those with young children, half don't want them but another 16% aren't sure. Among those with mobility limitations, 2/3 do not want sidewalks at all, and the rest, excepting one individual, want them on just one side. Fewer than 10% of now 211 survey respondents report wanting sidewalks on both sides. It should be a no-brainer to drop sidewalks on both sides given this level of opposition. Residents have repeatedly stressed that they want to minimize sidewalk installation and there is more room to do this, but the City, and you, are not listening.
5. The City has prioritized, instead, input collected from residents City-wide, using questions that were unrelated to any particular context, and framed without any reference to environmental impact. It turns out, the very people you (and the City) claim to care about with respect to access, equity and safety, hold multiple values at once and the environment definitely rises to the top. To presume that you and the City know what's best for them is the worst kind of paternalism and it marginalizes their voices. We have heard justifications from the City for ignoring these voices—one in particular is especially problematic: the City is building for future residents. This is a nifty way to disenfranchise today's voters, and ostensibly an argument that could be used to justify any decision the City wants to make, regardless of what current residents think.
6. Less than a few weeks ago, City staff admitted that no one had yet reached out to the Ho Chunk Nation to gather input about the LMD Project. In your blog post you state that this has now occurred, no doubt because concerned residents strenuously urged for the City to do just that, and not wait until the 11th hour to do a perfunctory ask. (Which is now the case).
7. You state that 15 trees will be removed. At the first public hearing in January, when asked how many trees would be removed, City staff could only say that they didn't know but it would be "a lot". Then it was 40 trees, according to the initial geometric plan. Now it is apparently 15—again, no doubt precisely because of the intense pushback on tree removal that the City has received. Yet you claim that residents have spread "disinformation" about the large number of trees being removed. How disingenuous. Residents have always used answers and numbers provided directly from City staff. This also illustrates one of the reasons residents have found this whole process to be opaque and confusing. You have done next to nothing to counteract this and in fact have made things so much worse by being dismissive of residents. The fact that you felt compelled to write a treatise addressing "misinformation" on your blog demonstrates how poor your communication has been with the neighborhood. Had we had good communication from you all along and a collaborative alder doing his best to represent his constituents, this would likely have been unnecessary.
8. Lake Mendota is experiencing a death by 1,000 cuts, as is Well 14. You dismiss concerns about the increase in salt use that will inevitably result from the installation of sidewalks—there is no way around this, as residents can't be forced to forgo salt use and they will worry about liability, just as the City does when it refuses to reduce salt on so many of its roads. You claim that LMD "is not a large contributing factor to salt in Well 14". This is just one example of what we are talking about. The cumulative decisions the City is making that are contributing to increased contamination in the lake and the well will continue the degradation of these important resources. Residents of Spring Harbor heard from City staff in a recent meeting that the contamination is getting worse. Yet, the City is not going to address these environmental concerns because they "are not required to for this project," and because they are "short-staffed". Neither are good reasons to ignore the problems we face with the lake and the well.

9. Residents who feel unsafe on LMD have also completed the survey by the neighborhood and what concerns the vast majority of them is the speed of traffic, not the lack of sidewalks. Almost everyone is in agreement that speed calming mechanisms would be good to have, especially after replacing the rough road which currently functions as a speed calming mechanism.

10. Residents have put forward progressive strategies for dealing with the LMD project that incorporate not only access, equity and safety but also the reversal of adverse environmental impacts. These are legitimate, research-based strategies that other progressive cities in the U.S. are adopting. The City would rather stick to a timeline than consider such proposals. What a lost opportunity to do something amazing that works for everyone.

11. Finally, I would just say that 200 residents is not a trivial number. When 200 residents sign a petition (separate from the neighborhood survey, which had over 200 respondents) and are telling you and the City that the process guiding this project has been awful and that they do not feel heard, that is due to poor leadership. 200 people don't just coincidentally feel unheard. You take no responsibility for this. If it were me in your position, I would be humbled by the amount of dissatisfaction and mistrust toward me held by my constituents, and I would own my part and work to fix it. I have to imagine that this is what most of the other Common Council members would do, as well. That you have not done this speaks volumes about you as a leader. I have attended a number of TC meetings at this point and I have witnessed how other alders have worked collaboratively with their constituents to come up with a final plan that works for as many people as possible. Their leadership stood out because it is the complete opposite of what we have in District 19.

You are on the Board of Public Works and the Common Council. With everything you have done to neglect your duty as the Spring Harbor neighborhood representative to the City, you should recuse yourself from voting on this project in all future decision points.

Kristen Slack

On Mar 28, 2022, at 11:14 AM, Furman, Keith <[district19@cityofmadison.com](mailto:district19@cityofmadison.com)> wrote:

Thank you for your feedback. Please take a look at my blog post. I believe it clarifies the facts on some of the issues you raise and it summarizes my position, which prioritizes equity, accessibility, and safety. I am extremely grateful for the ways that City staff work to customize plans to preserve existing character in neighborhoods when they undergo these projects. I am confident that the plan, especially as it evolves, will preserve character, but most importantly, will make this neighborhood more accessible to all.

<http://www.cityofmadison.com/council/district19/blog/?id=25136>

-Keith F.

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Alder Keith Furman, 19th District, Madison, WI

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Subscribe to my blog: <http://www.cityofmadison.com/council/district19/blog/>

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**From:** Jeff Bauer <[jeffreycbauer@gmail.com](mailto:jeffreycbauer@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Sunday, March 27, 2022 3:37 PM

**To:** Furman, Keith <[district19@cityofmadison.com](mailto:district19@cityofmadison.com)>

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**Subject:** Repairing your broken campaign promise

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Mr. Furman,

I voted for you in the last municipal election because you said during the campaign (<https://www.wortfm.org/join-us-district-19-debate-friday-at-5pm/>), "I work hard every day to connect people with resources and learn as much as I can about the options before Council so that I can best represent my neighbors...the issues that I emphasize are the priorities that I hear directly from District 19 residents." The way you are handling the upgrade to Lake Mendota Drive completely contradicts this promise you made as a candidate. You are not representing hundreds of Spring Harbor residents who have spoken out against your pet project, and you are actively working against neighbors' efforts to publicize options to it.

You did not even inform us about the project until a few days before the first public information presentation on January 11. Your excuse was that nothing had really been done on the project, but subsequent comments from the Mayor, City engineers, and surveyors prove that work had been underway for months. When called to task for this deception, you urged us to wait until we saw the proposal in hopes that we would like it. Well, hundreds of us did not like what we saw on January 11. We immediately asked for a delay so that we could become meaningfully involved in the planning process, but you have done absolutely nothing to delay and revise the plan based on what you heard from your constituents.

In spite of your efforts to suppress our input, dozens of Spring Harbor residents—including top-flight experts in key project areas—worked with the Spring Harbor Neighborhood Association to develop a proposal in accord with City policy. Hundreds of volunteer hours went into preparing this report over a period of two weeks—but you have consistently thwarted official consideration of its well-documented alternatives on the grounds that the City cannot modify existing policies to reflect unique attributes of Lake Mendota Drive. Your one-size-fits-all, my-way-or-the-highway approach is offensive because exceptions have been made on similar projects in other districts where Alders actually work with their constituents.

Perhaps most offensively, however, you personally had a City employee remove front-yard signs that promoted taking the time to do this project comprehensively and collaboratively. Your petty action was clearly designed to silence dissent. Elected officials may do this in Hoboken (the city where you got involved in politics, you said on WORT), but it is conduct unbecoming an elected official in Madison. Given the promise you made as a candidate, you have an ethical obligation to inform the Common Council on March 29 that your motion, "Approving roadway geometry for the reconstruction of Lake Mendota Drive from Baker Ave. to the City of Madison Limits," is strenuously opposed by a large number of constituents who are eager to help the City develop a plan that improves the environment, climate, and public health—goals not adequately addressed in the current plan. Please practice what you preached when you ran for the privilege of representing us, or resign.

Jeff Bauer