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Sent: Thursday, November 02, 2017 11:49 AM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: golf courses

Madison Parks Commission and the Golf Commission

I believe that trustees of Madison's green spaces should never have a discussion of selling even one square inch of any Madison Park. Our parks are precious islands in a sea of development and pavement. These are sacred grounds that need to be preserved for the generations to come, and not to be forced to turn a profit every quarter. I'm guessing that very few of the activities that take place in the Madison Parks are expected to pay their way. But golf is, for some reason.

If we sell off our park land how much new land will Madison be acquiring for public parks in the next 100 years? Creating our Central Park was a rare and difficult undertaking that might never happen again. The Monona and Yahara Hills Golf Course are properties that we already own and do not need to be bought at great expense. Identifying new park land should be the focus of the current Parks Commission, not shedding ground that doesn't earn a buck. As the population of Madison swells, our common green needs to be nourished and enlarged, not reduced, regardless of its current use.


Selling one of the most accessible of Madison's four public golf courses would be a mistake that would soon be regreted. The Monona Golf Course is an urban resource not only for golfers but for skiers, runners, and many kinds of wildlife and is much more accessible to the east and north side residents than the other Madison courses. Before you sell this irreplaceable resource you should look at ways of adding value to this location, much in the way that Brittingham, Wingra, and Marshall Parks have prospered with the boat rental additions, and that Olbrich Park seems to be doing with the beer garden.

There is a lot of land around the Dean House and the Monona Golf Course that could be developed in revenue producing ways. Build a bigger club house and bring in Tory Miller or Johnny Hunter to open a connected year round destination for fine dining as well as golf? Add a tennis court and a pool near the parking lot in land that is not needed for golf? Have a pro re-design the course to create a more demanding 9 hole asset? Sell or lease lots adjacent to the links for housing?

If the four Madison golf courses must turn a profit, then leasing land from part of the 36 hole Yahara Hills course would result in the least long term damage, and could result in a greater use of the rest of Yahara Hills for golf. And retain part of the legacy of Madison's public lands for future park users.

Respectfully,

Mike Burns

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