

From: [Ed Niles](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Comments on Item #4 in the Plan Commission meeting agenda for 7/11/24
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To the plan commission members & interested parties:

I wanted to submit my brief thoughts in regards to Item #4 in the Plan Commission meeting agenda (<https://madison.legistar.com/gateway.aspx?m=l&id=/matter.aspx?key=93221>, Notifications & Communication in the Development Process). As a resident of the City who believes we desperately need more market-rate housing built in Madison as quickly as possible, I would encourage the Plan Commission to keep in mind the goal of shortening and streamlining the approval process when discussing or considering changes to the processes of communication & public engagement. While engagement with the neighbors and community can be a critical component of a successful project, there is an (extremely vocal) minority of residents throughout the city these days who tend to engage with all proposed projects in strong opposition to any changes to a neighborhood or increased density. There are also alders who use city resources for notifications on every single project in their district, lest one of these extremely vocal critics come back and complain to the alder about not receiving adequate notification so they could throw sand into the gears of an otherwise reasonable project. I would recommend that there must be a reasonable balance which can be met here. Surely there is a class of projects being proposed and evaluated that are fairly standard and well within the purview of the planning commission to evaluate without rounds and rounds of community "engagement" wherein the alders and planning commission members need to sort through tons of repetitive comments looking for any excuse to deny a project. Based on what I've seen in the last year or two, most of the commenters in these cases are not engaged in the process in good faith, looking for reasonable accommodations or flagging things that wouldn't be obvious to someone on the commission, but instead rallying a chorus of excuses and complaints with the sole intent of killing any development project, even reasonable ones that meet all the criteria for swift approval. This false engagement (that usually doesn't amount to much in practical terms beyond excessive delay) creates a significant drag and penalty on new development and hurts our city in the long run.

Thanks for your time and consideration of these comments.

-Ed Niles

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