

**From:** [Abby Davidson](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Oppose Item 45  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 18, 2024 6:57:47 PM

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Some people who received this message don't often get email from [abby.s.davidson@gmail.com](mailto:abby.s.davidson@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Alders,

A development of the size and scale of Voit Farm deserves and needs robust community engagement. Sometimes, community input is hard to come by. Other times, there is Voit Farm, a parcel in the heart of Madison's east side that has sparked the imagination and interest of thousands of community members.

The first meeting in late 2019 of what later became Save the Farm, galvanized that community interest. Over 520 community members described their dreams in our input survey, dozens of members consistently attended twice-monthly meetings for several years. During this process, action teams formed and a community vision was fleshed out with the assistance of our architectural partners, Dimension IV. This grassroots collaboration yielded a whole host of partnerships, successful fundraising and investor interest, a \$500k conservation grant from Dane County, media coverage, and many other successes.

Opening up to listen and learn from the community's diverse voices takes time and effort--and this time and effort is well worth it in the end, because when the community is truly heard, the community is truly served.

While no development can incorporate every element of community interest, what is proposed in items 8 & 45 shows scant evidence of these 4-1/2 years of community effort. It is clear Starkweather LLC needs to go back and listen to the community. To fail to do so is a missed opportunity that the City must not allow.

Thank you,  
Abby

**From:** [Nicholas Davies](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Cc:** [Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina](#)  
**Subject:** Starkweather Plat / bridge over Starkweather Creek  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 18, 2024 7:56:46 PM

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Dear alders,

I didn't sign up to speak on this item because I very much support the plat and rezoning itself, of Stone House's property adjacent to Milwaukee Street.

However, I share Jeannie Cramer's concerns about adding another motor vehicle bridge over the creek (extending Chicago Ave) and allowing cut-through traffic, using streets that this same plat is designating as low-speed and low-volume.

I hope there will be an opportunity to reconsider that piece before the street connection gets built.

Thank you,

Nick Davies  
3717 Richard St

**From:** [Colleen Robinson](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Comments opposing agenda items 8 and 45 of June 18 Common Council meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 18, 2024 6:09:17 PM  
**Attachments:** [COAAgrihoodResolution4.23.2024.pdf](#)  
[Agrihood Resolution Flyer.png](#)

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Dear Alders/Common Council,

I strongly oppose these agenda items. I don't believe the public has had a fair and thorough review of the plans. The Letter of Intent referenced on the agenda's supplementary documents for item 45 is dated June of 2023 and from the plat information, it appears some of that has changed. Also, the plat information is incomprehensible to many people. A project of this size deserves thoughtful, compassionate discussion with an aim toward full understanding and transparency.

For example, until recently, the developers insisted they shared the development vision that Chicago Ave should not be extended over Starkweather Creek. Now, that extension is in the plan. Also, the affordable housing predictions/plans for this development have been worded vaguely and tentatively. It still has not been made clear exactly how much "affordable" housing will be incorporated and what the details of that affordability are. I feel the project has received support in part from people who do not have the full and current story, as I've read accolades about these elements that don't appear to be part of the plan anymore (Chicago Ave as bike transit only...not a road like in the plan currently), or are not well confirmed (affordability plan).

I urge a delay to this decision until the community has a better understanding of what is really taking place. If there are still unknowns, that's expected to a degree, but the unknowns should be clearly identified, not hidden in hopeful estimates of what we'd *like* to see. Promises like that often turn into declarations that "we ran the numbers and logistics and just couldn't make it happen. We're all so sorry," after plats are passed.

I've asked several community members to read through tonight's material to let me know if they have a firm grasp on what the plan and impact are. They do not. These are savvy individuals with advanced degrees and a bit of time on their hands. For those with extremely busy lives trying to make a living and run a household and who have never seen documents like this before, their power to understand and raise their voice in support or opposition is stripped. I see lots of detail here and a lot of effort has gone into communicating the plans, both for the plat (agenda 45) and zoning (agenda item 8). What has failed is a recognition that this is one way to describe the most recent plan and it is inaccessible to a huge proportion of our community members. That is shameful, for a City who calls itself progressive and striving for inclusivity.

For those who think something along the lines of more affordable housing and better partnership with land and life isn't possible, I refer to you just one example of a district doing far better than ours (see attached). Until we value life over money, we have little hope of

reaching our sustainability and community resilience goals.

Colleen Robinson

Registered in opposition without speaking at the meeting

RESOLUTION

<https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=427568>

NHM Motion Sheet HPC: 4.23.24 Page 1 of 3 1 Housing and Planning Committee 2  
Recommendation for Council Action No. 1

3 WHEREAS, an agrihood is a planned community that

4 integrates agriculture into a residential neighborhood; and

5 WHEREAS, agrihoods facilitate food production as well as provide green

6 space, recreation, aesthetics and value for a community; and

7 WHEREAS, the Urban Land Institute defines agrihoods as “single

8 family, multifamily, or mixed-use communities built with a working

9 farm or community garden as a focus;” and

10 WHEREAS, there are numerous examples from around the county of

11 agrihoods being developed in cities; and

12 WHEREAS, in Austin, there are opportunities to utilize some of the last

13 remaining farm properties for agrihoods that focus on affordable housing and

14 improved food access; and

15 WHEREAS, in the draft Austin Travis County Food Plan, the Community

16 Advisory Committee is proposing the inclusion of a Strategy that specifically

17 supports ‘agrihoods’ (Goal 1: Strategy 1.2); and,

18 WHEREAS, best practice points to a need for policy changes to allow

19 incentives for farmer-informed agricultural components, incentives for developers

20 in the design of a community, and public funding to support mixed-use affordable

21 residential, commercial, and agricultural; and

22 WHEREAS, possible partners for any local program to support agrihoods

23 include existing farm owners/ farmers, affordable housing developers, property NHM Motion

Sheet HPC: 4.23.24 Page 2 of 3

24 management companies, urban farm consultants, school districts, land conservation

25 organizations, and City and Travis County (“County”) staff; NOW,

26 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSING AND

27 PLANNING COMMITTEE:

28 The Housing and Planning Committee recommends that the City Council

29 direct the City Manager to investigate whether there are existing impediments to

30 agrihood development and best practices for programmatic support or local

31 funding in order to achieve agrihoods that are comparable to those in other parts of

32 the country.

33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

34 The Housing and Planning Committee recommends the City Council direct

35 the City Manager to explore the use of agrihoods as a pilot program in the North

36 East Planning District (NEPD), given its unique mixture of public land assets,

37 existing farmland, collaborative planning between the County and the City, and the

38 existence of the City’s only current agrihood.

39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

40 The Housing and Planning Committee recommends the City Council direct

41 the City Manager to explore additional ways to provide local support for

42 agrihoods. At a minimum, the City Manager should explore:

43 1. the feasibility of adopting a zoning typology for the agrihoods concept,

44 2. the availability of local or State tax incentives,

45 3. the availability of partnerships with Federal agencies and congressional

46 offices,

47 4. options to collaborate with the County on agrihood development, NHM Motion Sheet

HPC: 4.23.24 Page 3 of 3

48 5. the creation or curation of an agrihoods dashboard that tracks potential sites,  
49 needs, and opportunities for agrihoods within the combined City-County  
50 geography and establishes metrics for any future agrihoods considerations,  
51 and  
52 6. increased programmatic support for the Sustainability Office and other City  
53 staffing related to agrihoods.  
54 55 ADOPTED: , 2024 ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ 56 Myrna Rios 57 City Clerk

BACKGROUND INFO:

COA Affordable Housing Crisis

<https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=315714>



Austin City Hall  
301 W. 2nd St.  
May 2nd  
10am

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

# SUPPORT THE AGRIHOOD INITIATIVE

**Come support the Agrihood Initiative, promoting sustainable farm-based communities!**

Agrihoods can help with:

- Affordable housing
- Sustainability
- Local food production
- Economic opportunity

**Sign up to speak in favor of Agrihoods at:**  
[austintexas.gov/austin-city-council](https://austintexas.gov/austin-city-council)

For more information  
[district1@austintexas.gov](mailto:district1@austintexas.gov)