

From: Nicholas Leete <nicholas@rootedwi.org>
Sent: Friday, March 8, 2024 2:54 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Cc: Fey Nan <nanfey2@gmail.com>; Kauth Philip <Philk@reapfoodgroup.org>
Subject: North Olbrich Park Memo - community gardens

You don't often get email from nicholas@rootedwi.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Please see attached for a memo for your April 3rd informational meeting, put together by Nan Fey and I with input from potential community garden partners, approved February 21st by the Madison Food Policy council. In brief, it supports community garden's inclusion in the park plan, along with a recommendation of eventual location and size and that supporting infrastructure be considered and installed during remediation and initial park development to reduce overall costs and improve the eventual design of a community garden on the site.

Thanks, and let us know if you have any questions.

Nicholas Leete (*he/him/his*)
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Rooted
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www.rootedwi.org

The logo for 'rooted' features the word 'rooted' in a lowercase, sans-serif font. To the left of the text is a small green leaf icon.



TO: Board of Parks Commissioners Parks Staff

FROM: Madison Food Policy Council (approved on 2/21/24)

Prepared by Nicholas Leete, Chair of MFPC, RAFS and Director of Community Gardens Network at Rooted; Nan Fey, Former Chair of Food Policy Council, Plan Commission, and Farmland Preservation Task Force

RE: OLBRICH PARK – NORTH PARCEL COMMUNITY GARDEN

DATE: March 8, 2024

REQUESTED ACTION: Support including an accessible area for community gardening in the 2024 Park Development Plan for the area known as Olbrich Park-North Parcel on the historic Garver Feed Mill property. Proposal on page 3 of this memorandum.

Madison has a rare opportunity to plan a new park, with time to gather public input on a range of uses important to the community and identify necessary infrastructure before designing the area. The 2 options presented in November 2023 showed areas for walking trails or an off-leash dog park; survey and other community input revealed divided support for those uses, and revealed significant interest in gardening and biking; the nearby Atwood and Eastmorland community gardens both have waiting lists. During the December public input meeting, it became clear that the area has been designated a “brownfield” which is likely the reason no area was proposed for growing food; the contaminated soils are being remediated and capped in 2024, making gardening with clean soil in raised beds possible thereafter. The revised map made available on 2/1/24 includes community gardens, though they are “not shown” because the Parks Division will require a partnership with groups that can manage them. The Park Development Plan will be approved in the spring of 2024 to meet requirements set by the Wisconsin DNR for the remediation project.

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/projects/olbrich-park-north-parcel-park-development-plan>

The Garver Feed Mill site has a rich history of food production showcased in the recently renovated building, with tenants and uses that further its “local artisan food production facility” mission, including a coffee roaster, ice cream maker, Winter Farmers’ Market, Ian’s Pizza, and the REAP Food Group. It has also become a center of gravity for nearby neighborhoods, users of the Capitol City bike path and visitors to both Olbrich Botanical Gardens and Olbrich Park on Lake Monona.

Madison Parks' role in supporting urban agriculture is referenced in the recent update to the City's Comprehensive Plan and noted in the Farmland Preservation Task Force Report. Its "parks and open spaces" currently host 15 community gardens and Parks Staff have expressed a willingness to plan for a creative growing space on the Olbrich North Parcel. It's worth noting that while raised beds have been built in some community gardens, there is a general lack of wheelchair-accessible paths leading to garden beds. This site offers a good opportunity to provide universal accessibility.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

- **Madison Food Policy Council** provides policy support and advocacy for public growing space throughout the community.
- **Rooted** administers the Gardens Network, a partnership with the City of Madison and UW Extension, providing organizational support to new gardens based on community interest, identified leaders and available land.
- **REAP Food Group** is a tenant in the Garver Feed Mill. This local food systems organization is interested in on-site observation of activities, and using the space to provide learning opportunities for children and families involved with its educational programs
- **Public Health Madison & Dane County's** Community Health Assessment identifies food security and green space as priority areas. The department is invested in improving access to community gardens.
- **Olbrich Botanical Gardens**
- **Garver Feed Mill**

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

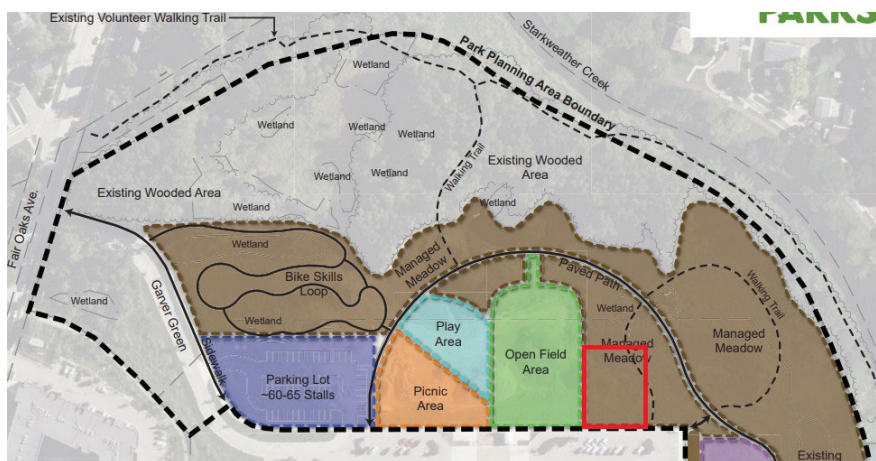
Water Infrastructure Access to water is an essential element of a community garden and often the most expensive element when installation requires crossing curbs and pavement. At Olbrich North, Parks has an opportunity to plan for and ideally install a water line to the area where a community garden, drinking fountain and/or other features may be located during the soil remediation phase of this project. This would greatly reduce the cost of providing water access in the new park.

Grading and pathways Pathways, like water infrastructure, can also be designed and graded during the soil remediation phase of the project, saving additional time and money by planning ahead. Paths should be continuous and meet ADA standards from the edge of the park to and throughout the garden to ensure universal accessibility.

Size An area of 3/4 acre could accommodate dozens of raised bed garden plots of various sizes and designs, with potential for in-ground plots depending on the remediation results.

Location The 3/4 acre red rectangle shown in the plan below satisfies these considerations. It is close to the Garver Feed Mill and the Capital City State Trail, allowing for easy access. It is far enough from the Starkweather to avoid most flooding and would not interfere with community desires to preserve and protect the riparian habitat.

PROPOSAL:



RECOMMENDATION: The Madison Food Policy Council recommends including an area for accessible community gardening in the Olbrich Park-North Parcel Park Development Plan in the area outlined in red, with the following revision of accompanying text:

Community Gardens (potential area shown in red) The community has shown interest in developing an area of raised and accessible public garden plots. Community partners are being identified to support this effort and working to have a proposal ready when the park plan is being implemented.

From: Mary Carbine <marycarbine@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, March 30, 2024 3:11 PM

To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>

Cc: Kaniewski, Adam B <AKaniewski@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: 4/3 Agenda Item #20, Olbrich Park - North Parcel Park Development Plan

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Dear Park Commissioners,

I'm writing with input on the Olbrich Park - North Parcel Park Development Plan, as I am likely unable to attend the April 3 meeting. I live in the Worthington Park neighborhood, and frequently walk or bike to the Garver Feed Mill and enjoy the natural areas along the creek.

I support the plan and appreciate the work of staff in balancing many -- and sometimes competing -- interests and input. My input on the implementation is to please prioritize:

- The health of Starkweather Creek, a watershed of greatest concern for which there has been restoration at great effort, and some of the last bits of habitat and natural area we have in the city.
- The health of the Garver Feed Mill, which is full of local businesses and was also restored at great effort.

As a fairly nearby neighborhood resident, I am willing to give up or compromise on amenities or activity areas to support these priorities. I hope that the concerns from Lance Green at the February meeting (stormwater controls for paved areas, and how bikers will be kept out of natural areas north of the bike skills trails) were adequately addressed.

And while this may seem surprising, I support the addition of parking to the area (along with ensuring there is generous bicycle parking). I spent ten years working to support the downtown retail district, and I learned a lot about what local small businesses really need to survive. Top of the list is that they need customers to be able to access them, especially for a destination area that is not in the pathway of daily foot traffic. Like it or not, our current dominant method of getting to places is by car. I do not agree that reducing parking for local businesses is an effective way to get people to change their transportation modes. People already inclined to bike, bus or walk will do so, but for people not so inclined, a lack of parking just encourages them to choose not to go to the business or destination, or -- as those who are onsite daily observe -- to park in unauthorized parking areas. I do not agree with the approach of trying to remove or reduce parking in local business districts or destinations to force change in customer transportation modes. That is better done with large-scale employment centers or existing major corridors. Once local business areas are fully and completely served by robust public transportation and population density, it can be considered.

Given the proximity of the parking to a watershed, is it possible to explore permeable pavement? (Here is an EPA web page about it: <https://www.epa.gov/soakuptherain/soak-rain-permeable-pavement>) I am not an expert in this, but wonder if it would be a way to reduce the stormwater runoff, and if it would be financially feasible, can be maintained, etc.

Thank you for your service on the Park Commission, and for considering my input.

--

Mary Carbine

marycarbine@gmail.com

From: Nicholas Davies <nbdavies@gmail.com>

Sent: Sunday, March 31, 2024 5:54 PM

To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>

Cc: Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina <district15@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: Olbrich North parking should be sized for Olbrich North only

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Park Commissioners,

I have several concerns with the parking lot currently planned for Olbrich North:

1. Residents are overwhelmingly against it.

It was a recurring/predominant theme at the second PIM that a 60-stall lot is way too much, but the plans on your agenda show this element as unchanged. The presentation slides frame this as a "both sides" issue, but I encourage you to sidestep this slanted framing and review the PIM recording for yourselves.

2. Additional parking for Garver contradicts Madison zoning code.

Parking is part of what the Plan Commission reviews, when they approve a development like Garver--the amount, how it's oriented relative to the building, how traffic will flow on the site, etc.

In addition, a business like Garver would nowadays have to submit a Transportation Demand Management plan, and select from a standard list of strategies to mitigate their impact on the transportation system, such as providing employees with transit passes or charging for parking (decoupling it from rent of space in the building). If too many people are arriving at Garver by car, the city has a standard list of strategies to address that. Paving over an adjacent park isn't one of them.

The bottom line is, Garver has the amount of parking that they're meant to have under Madison ordinance. The same is true for Olbrich Gardens. For Parks to decide otherwise based on subjective *vibes* is completely inappropriate.

3. Paving over public parkland to serve as private vehicle storage for an adjacent business is unprecedented.

Out of the 236 Madison city parks, only 32 of them (about 1/7) have a parking lot at all. Parks without parking lots (the vast majority of city parks) include parks that are larger than Olbrich North.

Even among the 32 parks that have parking lots, none of those were sized to be used as a private vehicle storage area for an adjacent business. This would set a precedent that business owners could cite in future situations.

4. It's ecologically destructive.

The Starkweather corridor is super important as a habitat for many wildlife species, and as a route that wildlife can use to travel through the city. Paving such a large area of the park would shrink wildlife habitat, add impervious surface, and require salt usage right next to the pond and creek. The vehicle traffic on the lot would also increase the light, noise, and air pollution, and create opportunities for roadkill.

5. Increasing parking just induces more demand for parking.

There is no magic number where, even at peak times, everyone will have a spot to park, and no one will park off-piste. There are many other places that visitors could park within easy walking distance to Garver, including other lots within Olbrich Park, and street parking in Eastmorland. Garver visitors almost never resort to that, because parking enforcement onsite is so lax.

Building more parking for Garver customers won't change that, it will only further incentivize people to arrive by car, even if they intend to imbibe. Garver could instead incentivize hotel shuttles or satellite parking for those special events.

6. There are so many other things we need the space for.

Some residents want to maximize conservation space. Others want more outdoor event space. Or restrooms. Or community gardens. Or a dog run. Or a bike skills track. Or more tree canopy. We could accommodate more of these needs if we weren't wasting so much of the park on automobile storage.

I recognize the need for a handful of handicap spots for visitors to the park who do need them. I urge the Board to direct Parks staff to reconsider the parking lot size, and to base it solely on the needs of the park itself.

Thank you,

Nick Davies
3717 Richard St

From: Nan Fey <nanfey2@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 1, 2024 2:20 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Olbrich Park - North Parcel comments

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Parks Commission Staff,

Attached please find an additional "public submittal" regarding the Olbrich Park – North Parcel Park Development Plan to be attached in Legistar ID# 82673 and distributed to members of the BPC prior to its meeting on Wednesday.

These comments provide additional background and support for the Requested Action in the memorandum from the Madison Food Policy Council that was shared with the Board of Park Commissioners by its Chairperson Nicholas Leete on March 8th. As co-author of the MFPC memo, and having chaired Madison's Community Garden's Committee, Food Policy Council, and Farmland Preservation Task Force, I am planning to attend the meeting on April 3rd in

person to answer questions commissioners may have during their discussion of Agenda Item #20 – Informational presentation of the Olbrich Park – North Parcel Park Development Plan. Thank you.

Nan Fey
444 West Wilson Street

Attachment:

Honorable Park Commissioners,

April 2024

In the first week of December, the Madison Food Policy Council (MFPC) and its Regional Agriculture and Food Sovereignty Work Group became aware of the Olbrich Park-North Parcel Park Development planning process. Having missed the opportunity to participate in the November survey, representatives attended both Public Input Meetings, emailed and met with Parks Staff to advocate for including an above-ground community garden (using clean soils in raised beds), and located near water and parking, that would be accessible to gardeners of all abilities. There are at least five reasons to support this proposal:

1. The 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update approved the addition of “urban agriculture” to the list of appropriate uses in Parks & Open Spaces. Legistar ID#80281
2. The 2023 Task Force on Farmland Preservation’s Report, authorized and adopted by the Common Council, recommended the Parks Division plan proactively for growing spaces on its properties. Legistar ID#77441
3. The MFPC formally expressed its support and engaged with community partners indicating willingness to participate in the effort. Legistar ID#82673, Attachment #3
4. Community input during this planning process shows support. PPT slide #21
5. There is still time to plan, and find resources, for this effort while the brownfield remediation project prepares the overall site for implementation of amenities that Parks Staff expects to begin in 2025.

Most importantly, as you can see in the list of potential uses on the site plan shown on Slide #30, Parks Staff is willing to include garden space with the help of community partners. The Board of Park Commissioners can advance this effort NOW by asking Staff to identify potential locations while there is still an opportunity for substantial cost savings by planning for a water supply and access to the garden

as part of the soil removal, capping and grading during the remediation process this year. The site plan in the MFPC memo shows an area that has been suggested in discussions with Staff.

Thank you for whatever you can do to facilitate the inclusion of a fully accessible community garden in Olbrich Park in the North Parcel plan.

Nan Fey, Resident and past Chair of Madison's Community Gardens Committee,
Food Policy Council, and Farmland Preservation Task Force

From: Nola R C <nolarc@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 6:47 AM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Parks feedback/Olbrich north parcel

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Hi,

I'm very disappointed to see there's no dog park in the new Olbrich North parcel plan.

I advocated for such at the first meeting held about this parcel. With so much inbuilding going on, the need for dog parks near people's homes only increases. Dog parks work a little better when they're not overcrowded with a lot of dogs there at the same time.

On-leash walking does not provide the same type of exercise that a dog park does, and some dogs just really need to run. We have some wonderful large dog parks like the one at Capital Springs or Token Creek, but the need for smaller parks exists too. Busy people don't always have the time to drive out to those large parks. The two small east side parks, Brittingham and Demetral, are a little bit too small. The one that was proposed at Olbrich was a good size for a small one (3 acres, if I recall correctly).

More people in our city have dogs than children. No one bats an eye at park space being developed for children (and rightly so). I feel it should be the same way for our canine family members.

When I attended the parks planning meeting, I was frankly kind of disgusted at the misinformed objections that were being given about dog parks. I used to hold some of those same views before I had a dog and realized he needed that type of exercise and started frequenting dog parks. Now I know that dog parks aren't giant piles of dog crap where dogs are fighting everyday. And also if you take the time to actually watch a dog enjoying the dog park, it can be a joyful experience. A dog running around at full speed never looks happier.

Thank you for your time and I hope the East side can get another dog park at some point because with increasing population density it really is needed. 33% of our households have dogs!

Nola Risse-Connolly
4916 Turner Avenue, Madison

From: Katie Olson <sabineisawesome1144@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 8:10 AM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Park beside garver feed mill feedback

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Hello,

I read about the plans for a new park next to garver feed mill in the "608" Madison newsletter email. I think this is a great idea!

I wanted to add a suggestion to use a little more of the area for overflow parking, perhaps even a small or underground ramp. I am strongly in favor of a park don't get me wrong, and it could even be two separate parking areas to avoid one huge concrete patch, but the event capacity of garver is about 1000 people, so adding just ~65 stalls doesn't do too much to alleviate the current parking issue that might only be made worse by adding a lovely park. As someone who helps coordinates an event at garver and likes to attend others, parking is one of the main issues in utilizing this community resource. I personally have driven to garver only to drive away and not attend the event I wanted to when the weather was bad and there was no parking, since street parking is so far away. I am sad to think the same has probably happened for my event even though the weather was nice, especially for those with mobility issues. The sidewalk entrance from the street to garver is long, with an even longer way to wherever one may be able to find neighborhood parking and sparse pedestrian crossings across S. Fair Oaks Ave. It would be safer and more inclusive for both event attendees and park goers if there were enough on site parking stalls to meet frequent event needs.

I'm sure the motivation behind building a park on this undeveloped land isn't to address the event parking issue at garver, however I wanted to at least raise the issue because I believe some of the community impact of both garver and the new park is limited if people from around the city won't want to attend because they know parking will be a pain and they'll have to look for far away neighborhood parking. If there is plenty of parking on site, everyone will be able to come and enjoy both spaces rain, snow, or shine, without worry. That's why we should include more than 65 new parking stalls when developing the land beside garver feed mill.

Thank you for your consideration and good luck with the park, I'm sure it'll be amazing!

-Katie Olson, vilas neighborhood

From: Michael Barrett <pedalaverde@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 12:37 PM
To: Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina <district15@cityofmadison.com>; Michael D. Barrett <mikeb@urbanthoreau.com>; Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>; Pam Barrett Rocks <pambarrett2@gmail.com>; SASY P&D Committee <sasy-pnd@googlegroups.com>; SASYNA-Discussions <sasyna-discussion@googlegroups.com>; Ben D. Williams <Benjamin.d.williams@gmail.com>; catie.mcdonald@gofarewell.com; Figueroa Cole, Yannette <district10@cityofmadison.com>; Myadze, Charles <district18@cityofmadison.com>; marc.eisen02@gmail.com; Moira Harrington <moira@aqu.wisc.edu>; Michelle Probst <mscarpace92@gmail.com>; pfanlund@madison.com
Subject: Bd of Parks Agenda Item 20. Olbrich N Plat: Ignoring our plans, Paving & Privatizing our Park for Parking

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Dear Parks Commissioners,

We do not need more parking at Olbrich/Garver. There is already plenty:

-Near the ball diamonds (parking sits empty most of the year, used mostly when Olbrich is closed or not busy).

-At the boat ramps (ditto)

-At Kipp (ditto)

-On nearby streets within 2-3 blocks of Garver.

Marquette, Dixon and Ryan and streets in nearby Eastmoreland look like this on a typical Farmers' Market Saturday:



Not only does nearby Kipp have vast acreage of unused parking (see sign in foreground), if you look down Fair Oaks (toward the vanishing point), most on-street parking sits unused on a typical Farmers' Market Saturday:



-Curb lane on inbound Atwood could be converted into parking on weekends. That would yield many dozens of parking spaces, no additional paving required! The outside/curb travel lane is about weekday am rush hour. Weekends are low traffic demand/high parking demand. Perfect maximum, synergistic utilization of an existing paved asset.

There are many more instances of pavement going wasted within a 10 minute walk of the market.

-It will not hurt anyone to walk 10 minutes. For those who can't/won't, use the money saved from not paving to run a tram to-from the parking, just like Disneyland.

-Maybe the Garver needs to market the concept of less paving as healthy for us, healthy for the environment and healthy for the public fisc. Begin to align profit with good.

-If more ADA parking is the driver of paving the N Plat, then let's instead re-designate more spaces adjacent to Garver as ADA.

-Proof that more parking is not needed:

There are many weekends when Garver maxes out at capacity. Somehow people make their way there anyway. Even in the middle of snowy winters.

Bike parking is full. People stream in walking on the bike path. Yay. As it should be. Keep encouraging that good behavior. Give them a free ice cream cone.

-Max capacity is max capacity. Adding parking will not change it. It only encourages bad behavior (driving) instead of good behavior (walking, biking, bus).

-Begin to charge for parking anywhere on site—whether Olbrich or Garver. That by itself will reduce parking (see Donald Shoup's, [The High Cost of Free Parking](#)).

-Parking is being presented as an economic benefit for, as the area alder put it "an economic driver of the eastside" meaning Garver. So now we are to start giving away parkland for private businesses? Staff claims that this is a unique one-off; that there is no other situation in the city where parkland can be given over to private business.

A) So they admit that this is a giveaway to private business.

B) They are wrong. Indeed I own a thriving business routinely maxing out capacity yet with no on-site parking. But there is parkland across the street. Why shouldn't that be paved for *my* business's private interest? For the irony deficient, that was sarcasm. Point being, Garver deserves no special consideration above & beyond any other private enterprise. I bought a biz in an area with full knowledge that it had relatively little parking Garver's developers developed that site with the full understanding that the neighborhood did not want to see this site surrounded by acres of parking. Now they are doing an end-run around that explicit agreement.

C) As for parking being an economic driver for the eastside, wrong again. When parking was required to be plentiful, older areas such as nearby Atwood languished in economic decline. But there was plenty of parking. Why? Because there was nothing there. Empty storefronts. Economically bereft. When parking requirements were lifted, economic resurgence followed, property values rose smartly. More here:

<https://isthmus.com/opinion/opinion/citizen-the-real-reason-for-atwood-avenues-renaissance/>
Contrarily, here's what the economics of plentiful parking looks like:



On a per square foot basis, parking “deficient” areas are more economically vibrant than parking plentiful areas. Furthermore, the city can more easily—and cost-effectively—provide city services to areas that are more compact, less car-oriented. You might have heard that the city is facing a \$27m budget hole?

D) Garver claims they need the parking for their Christmas market. This giveaway of parking, then, amounts to an unconstitutional establishment of a religion.

E) What gives Garver the idea that they deserve city-funded parking anyway? At the top of every Parks Agenda, key questions are posed for you, the commissioners:

“Consider: Who benefits? Who is burdened? Who does not have a voice at the table? How can policymakers mitigate unintended consequences?” Well, your staff and the alder for the area have made it clear that this is for the benefit of a private enterprise. A private enterprise that has elbowed its way into a hegemonic position of Outright Demand. The people & the plans they worked so hard on have been shoved aside.

F) The Eastside is dreadfully park-deficient. Why are we paving & giving it away?

-I note in your public comment document that staff completely excludes the comment from the city-sponsored Zoom meeting. This is a rank disservice to the citizens who took the time to prepare and present well-thought-out testimony. Once again, shoved aside. No voice at the table. Why was public comment excluded? Apparently Parks is now on board with quashing public comment: https://captimes.com/opinion/paul-fanlund/opinion-historian-mollenhoff-laments-power-shift-to-madison-planners/article_51fdce6a-efa1-11ee-91e0-67fa1f38249b.html

-Opposition to more parking is presented by your staff as the voices of a few. Your survey shows otherwise. Why was that data excluded?

-Furthermore, the neighborhood engaged the city, Parks, Olbrich Botanical Society and surrounding private interests in a good-faith planning process several years ago, producing a quality plan. Not perfect, but reflective of the variety of values coming to bear on the site. The plan was ignored here. Why were those (many) voices ignored? Again, the people, shoved aside.

-In a time of a burning earth, and a \$27 million budget hole, it's time to start thinking about better utilization of what we have, rather than spending more to pave more.

Stop the mallification of the Eastside!

[Please enter this into the record of every agenda item relating to the development of the Garver/Olbrich North Plat.]

Sincerely,
Mike Barrett
2137 Sommers Ave.
Madison WI 53704
