

**Stouder, Heather**

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**From:** Zellers, Ledell  
**Sent:** Monday, December 07, 2015 8:43 AM  
**To:** Stouder, Heather; Firchow, Kevin; Parks, Timothy; Wendt, Jay  
**Subject:** Fw: for Monday night agenda item

FYI

Alder Ledell Zellers  
608 417 9521

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**From:** Nancy Thayer-Hart [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 6, 2015 10:25 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** for Monday night agenda item

Dear Members of the Plan Commission,

At your meeting on Monday, December 7, you will be asked to approve what is being called the Emerson East-Eken Park-Yahara "Neighborhood" Plan. While the Plan includes some thoughtful recommendations, there are some aspects of both the Plan and the process behind it that are extremely troubling. Therefore, I hope you will give it more than a cursory look and routine approval.

A close reading of the Plan reveals that much more time and thought was put into some of the focus areas than others. Not surprisingly, the areas that fared better were well represented on the steering committee. Focus Area 5, the "Sherman/Fordem Avenue Neighborhood Mixed-Use Node" had no residents on the steering committee, and this lack of first-hand knowledge and understanding of the area is evident throughout the Plan in incomplete and inaccurate assessments and descriptions of the area, uninformed and misdirected recommendations, and multiple conflicts with the principles set forth in the Plan itself.

You will be told that great efforts were made to enlist a resident of the Burrows Park/Great Lakes Area to serve on the steering committee. As civic-minded as you must be to give your time and energy to serving on the Plan Commission, I wonder if you would pay much heed to a mailing inviting your participation in a time-consuming neighborhood project if it was not within your own neighborhood? That's what happened to our Burrows Park/Great Lakes Area: the cards that were sent out referenced the Emerson East and Eken Park Neighborhoods rather than the Sherman Neighborhood that our area is actually in. Scooping up disparate parcels and charging a steering committee does not a neighborhood make! Nor does it reflect the kind of transparent government that Madison residents expect.

You will also be told that there were many opportunities to provide input to the Plan. We submitted comments prior to the public presentation of the draft; we posted comments at the public presentation; once we learned that "EEEEPY" included our area, we asked to have a representative on the steering committee; we submitted detailed written comments on the public review draft; and over 70 people submitted comments and/or signatures outlining concerns with the final review draft. What was done with our input?

- None of our comments were reflected in the public review draft;
- The comments we posted at the public presentation were taken down, in violation of free speech rights;
- We were told it was "too late" to have a representative on the steering committee, even though vital steps in the process still remained;
- Our concern about exceeding the height limits for mixed-use was totally ignored. In fact, subsequent to our input, the suggested building height for Focus Area 5 was increased from 3 stories to 5 stories!
- The input from over 70 people was presented to the steering committee in such a way as to make it indistinguishable from, and thus given the same weight as, the input of a single individual.

You may also be told that we were given an unprecedented opportunity (which required working over the Thanksgiving weekend) to provide a last-minute addendum to the Plan. Very little of what we prepared and submitted is reflected in what you will see in the Final Review Draft.

The Plan states, "Project staff created goals, concepts, design elements, and recommendations." Absent representation or even consideration of our input, the recommendations for Focus Area 5 can only be considered a Planning Department plan, and by no stretch of the imagination can it rightly be called a neighborhood plan. Even the name of the Plan omits reference to the Burrows Park/Great Lakes Area!

Given the good work that was done on behalf of Emerson East, Eken Park, and Yahara neighborhoods, I am not suggesting that you scrap the whole plan. However, I do ask you to remove the recommendations for Focus Area 5 until such time as:

- a) a group of residents from the Burrows Park/Great Lakes Area is convened (and given the same level of staff support as was the EEEEEPY steering committee) to do a thorough review of the needs of the area and produce a valid and well-considered set of recommendations; OR,
- b) the Sherman Neighborhood Plan is updated with specific reference to the Burrows Park/Great Lakes Area.

Thank you,

Nancy Thayer-Hart