



Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara Neighborhood Association

Thursday, July 18, 2019

Sydney Prusak
City of Madison – Department of Planning, Community & Economic Development
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., MMB, Suite 017
Madison, WI 53701

Ms. Prusak,

I send this letter on behalf of the SASY Neighborhood Association in support of the proposed parking reduction associated with the similarly proposed expansion in capacity for the Winnebago Arts Café, located at 2262 Winnebago Street. The SASY Board voted unanimously to support this expansion at its June 13th meeting. Jacob Dehaven, one of the proprietors of the café, presented his proposal to the board at that meeting.

The SASY Board does not extend such support lightly or without due consideration. Indeed, concerns about parking permeate nearly every development proposal our neighborhood has ever seen in our collective memory. On the one hand, there is legitimacy to these concerns when it comes to the absolute number of parking spots available, and the increased number of people looking to use that parking for café events. On the other hand, we feel that these concerns miss a more important issue; if we let parking concerns exert so much control over our decisions then we will inevitably lose some of the greatest opportunities to improve and enhance our neighborhood.

For example, the Barrymore Theater is located a short walk away and has a seating capacity of 971. It has very little dedicated parking to serve such a high seating capacity. The paucity of parking dedicated to the Barrymore does indeed strain the surrounding neighborhood. No doubt any proposal to build a venue like the Barrymore under current zoning and parking requirements would fail under a barrage of criticism and resistance due in large part to parking considerations. But consider what the Barrymore does for the neighborhood in all its non-conforming glory. It has been a catalyst and focal point for major neighborhood renovation. Would it be worth trading the likes of the Barrymore for easier parking? The SASY Board doesn't think so.

The proposal before you for the Winnebago Arts Café expansion can be viewed in a similar light, if a smaller scale. The proposed parking reduction offers an opportunity to help a new business grow and thrive outside the standard limitations. Our position also plays into what we see as the future for the Winnebago Street/Schenks Corners area. Most of the development over the past 10 years has taken the form of higher density, business, arts & entertainment district.

Additionally, we feel that the assertive plan put forward by the owners of the Winnebago Arts Café to reduce auto driving will likely have an impact on the number of personal vehicles driven to the venue. Coupled with customer awareness of extremely limited parking options, we feel that patrons will often choose other means of getting to and from the venue.

Finally, it is our opinion that the upper level of the requested capacity (225) will seldom if ever be realized. Instead, maximum crowds of more modest numbers (130-150) are much more likely.



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Thank you for your time and consideration in receiving this feedback from the neighborhood association. I understand that there is another public meeting scheduled for 7/24. Although I will not be able to do so personally, it is my hope that other members of the SASY Board will attend and participate in that meeting.

Please share this letter of support with the members of the Plan Commission and any others involved in this decision as you see fit. Also, feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the neighborhood association viewpoint.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad Hinkfuss', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Brad Hinkfuss
President – SASY, Inc.

Cc: SASY Board, Alder Rummel, Jacob DeHaven