



Office of the Mayor

David J. Cieslewicz

Room 403
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
Madison, Wisconsin 53703-3345
PH 608 266 4611
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mayor@cityofmadison.com

March 13, 2007

The Committee on Community Gardens provides a public forum where garden advocates and City government can work together to build a productive and sustainable system of community gardens in Madison. Recognizing its charge to preserve, expand and enhance opportunities for community gardening, the committee fully supports the efforts of the Sheboygan Community Garden to remain a permanent feature of the Hill Farms area.

After years of lost plots, uncertain leases and isolation from each other, Madison's community gardens have enjoyed a decade of stability, growth and increased support from garden developers and city government. An exception is the Sheboygan garden, which was threatened with conversion to a parking lot in the mid-90s and again faces an uncertain future with redevelopment of the Hill Farms office area. Yet the strength and vitality of community gardening in Madison today owes much to the determined struggles of Sheboygan gardeners to preserve their plots.

Sheboygan gardeners were leaders in forming the Madison Community Gardeners Coalition in 1995. MCGC was critical in saving the Hill Farms garden and preserving 31 acres on the city's North side that became the Troy Gardens project. The coalition also petitioned the City for an ad hoc advisory group that evolved into the permanent committee, one of whose current members is a Sheboygan gardener. Recognizing that their separate voice would not save the garden, Sheboygan's leaders engaged other community gardeners and supporters throughout the City, and in many ways, all of Madison's community gardens are stronger for that effort.

Despite its uncertain tenure, the Sheboygan garden has flourished. Since its founding in 1981, gardeners have enriched the clay loam soil with compost, mulch and other organic matter. With a waiting list of at least 20 families, they have accepted the city's most stringent plot limits: 73 families tend the garden's 60 plots. The site includes gardeners of nearly every race, and a third of them speak at home in languages other than English. It has the highest number and ratio of raised beds for older and differently abled gardeners. Sheboygan was one of the Madison's first community gardens to organize for self-management, and it remains one of the most successful.

In short, Sheboygan is the model of a successful community endeavor—committed, inclusive, productive and self-sustaining, an asset to the immediate neighborhood and to gardeners and community-based organizations throughout Madison. The Committee on Community Gardens encourages the City and its planning partners to recognize the value of Sheboygan Garden and ensure its lasting presence at the Hill Farms site.

Sincerely,

Alice Anderson
Chair, Community Gardens Committee



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July 18, 2009

To Whom It May Concern,

The Committee on Community Gardens for the City of Madison would like to express its ongoing support for the survival of the Sheboygan Community Gardens which have faced an uncertain future since 2006 when the Department of Transportation began discussing redevelopment of the Hill Farms site where the gardens are located. Sheboygan gardeners have been working tirelessly ever since to help find a resolution to this problem, and we applaud their efforts.

After a lengthy process of identifying the most important criteria that would need to be satisfied if the gardens must be relocated, they have researched potential sites, attended numerous meetings and discussions with the developers and planners of the DOT project, and came to the conclusion **“that the inclusion of the Sheboygan Community Garden in the Hill Farms Redevelopment Plan as part of the new DOT facility is a feasible and desirable resolution for the future of the garden.”**

The Sheboygan gardeners are making the following requests:

1. That the State of Wisconsin and the Department of Transportation formally adopt the Sheboygan Community Garden and its planning criteria as part of its redevelopment plans for the Hill Farms site;
2. That the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration and its planning staff include a community garden on site C or D (rooftop or grade) as part of the program requirements for the future DOT project; and
3. That the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration, City of Madison Planning Staff and the Sheboygan Community Garden’s Preservation Committee continue to work together toward a development of a community garden site within the Hill Farms Development that can serve as a model for public open space and urban agriculture.

The City of Madison Committee on Community Gardens fully supports the efforts made by this dedicated gardening community thus far, and believes in its commitment to work cooperatively with the stakeholders in this complex development process. We hope you will formally adopt and incorporate items #1 and #2 in the Hill Farms Development process as it goes forward.

Sincerely,

Nan Fey, Co-Chair
Community Gardens Committee

Alice Anderson, Co-Chair
Community Gardens Committee



Community Gardens Committee

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December 9, 2014

To: Mike Huebsch, Secretary
Department of Administration
P. O. Box 7864
Madison, WI 53707-7864

Summer Strand, Secretary
State Building Commission
P. O. Box 7866
Madison, WI 53707-7866

Re: Sheboygan Community Gardens and RFP #505-004

Dear Secretaries Huebsch and Strand,

We are writing on behalf of the Madison Community Gardens Committee, which provides a public forum where garden advocates and government officials can work together to build a productive and sustainable system of community gardens in our city. It has come to our attention that the Sheboygan Garden is threatened by development proposals requested by the State of Wisconsin that owns the land on which it is located. We respectfully request that you find a way to preserve this garden and honor the community values it represents.

Madison today owes much of the strength and vitality of its community gardens to the determination of Sheboygan gardeners to preserve their plots for the past three decades. They were leaders in forming the Madison Community Gardens Coalition in 1995, which was critical to saving the garden from a proposed parking lot on the current site, and also petitioned the City to form an ad hoc advisory group to support gardens throughout the community. That ad hoc group became the Community Gardens Committee, and the City further expressed the value it places on local food initiatives by creating a Food Policy Council in 2012 on which the Community Gardens Committee has a seat.

Despite its uncertain tenure, the Sheboygan Garden has flourished. Since its founding in 1981, gardeners have enriched the clay soil with compost, mulch and other organic matter. Although there is a waiting list, gardeners have adhered to strict plot limits, and over 100 families tend the 60 plots on the current site. Gardeners are of many races, one-third of them speak a language other than English in their homes and 40% are low income. There are numerous raised beds available for those with accessibility challenges. Sheboygan was one of Madison's first community gardens to organize for self-management, becoming a model for others, and remains one of the most successful community gardens in the city.

The Sheboygan Garden is a successful community endeavor – committed, inclusive, productive and self-sustaining. It is an asset to the immediate neighborhood as well as to gardeners and community-based organizations throughout Madison. The Community Gardens Committee encourages the State of Wisconsin, through its representatives at the Department of Administration and the State Building Commission, to preserve the Sheboygan Garden in whatever development proposal is accepted for the property on which it is located. Many options were explored, and provisions were made, in the previous project that was approved in 2007; we hope and expect that the same level of care and attention will be provided in the current process.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Nan Fey, co-chair
Community Gardens Committee



Jill Schneider, co-chair
Community Gardens Committee

cc: Cindy Torstveit, Administrator, Division of Facilities Management, DOA
R. J. Binau, Director Capital Budget & Construction Administration, DOA
State Senator Fred Risser
Mayor Paul Soglin
Matt Tucker, City of Madison Zoning Administrator
Alder Chris Schmidt, Madison Common Council District 11



Madison Food Policy Council

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January 8, 2015

To: Mike Huebsch, Secretary
Department of Administration
P. O. Box 7864
Madison, WI 53707-7864

Summer Strand, Secretary
State Building Commission
P. O. Box 7866
Madison, WI 53707-7866

Re: Sheboygan Community Gardens and RFP #505-004

Dear Secretaries Huebsch and Strand,

The Madison Food Policy Council is sending this letter to express its support for the Sheboygan Community Garden that is currently threatened by development proposals requested by the State of Wisconsin that owns the land on which it is located. We respectfully request that you find a way to preserve this garden and honor the community values it represents.

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Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nan Fey". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right across the page.

Nan Fey, Chair
Madison Food Policy Council

cc: Cindy Torstveit, Administrator, Division of Facilities Management, DOA
R. J. Binau, Director Capital Budget & Construction Administration, DOA
State Senator Fred Risser
State Representative Therese Berceau
Mayor Paul Soglin
Matt Tucker, City of Madison Zoning Administrator
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