

From: Ka'tya Fassett <katyafassett@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 10:23 AM

To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>; Evers, Tag <district13@cityofmadison.com>; Knepp, Eric <eknepp@cityofmadison.com>; Freiwald, Ann <AFreiwald@cityofmadison.com>; Urban Design Comments <urbandesigncomments@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: agenda item 64455 - master plan comments

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

Lack of parking for Vilas Zoo is a big problem negatively impacting the residents of the Vilas neighborhood, and I don't see that this issue has been addressed in a satisfactory way in the Vilas Park Master Plan.

The primary entrance to Vilas Zoo is on the North side, yet very few parking spaces are planned near that entrance. It is the beginning of March (several inches of snow are still on the ground) and we are in a pandemic, but even now at this early point in the season parking on weekends on streets surrounding the zoo is a problem. I live a few blocks from the zoo, and yesterday (Saturday, March 6th) I had trouble getting my car out of my driveway due to cars parked beyond the curb and crossing over the area that is my driveway. This is unfortunately a common problem for me on weekends during the 3 seasons when the zoo is busiest. Visitors to the zoo clearly need places to park their cars and they are desperate to squeeze into any spot they find. I do not understand how it's possible that those involved in making decisions for the park master plan are not addressing this issue. Perhaps committee members should walk around the Vilas neighborhood on a sunny Saturday/Sunday to see for themselves that more parking for the zoo is necessary. (Please note that if the North entrance to the zoo is meant to be more of a walk-up entrance and parking is to be focused on the South end of the zoo, the main entrance should be on the South end near the larger parking area. That is only logical.)

In addition to the above comments regarding parking, I would like to voice my opposition to the proposed change to the location of the Vilas Park Zoo parking lot entrance from the corner of Drake/Randall to Drake across from Campbell. My reasons are these:

- (1) The stretch of Drake St along the edge of the park is currently quiet and shady and I think it adds to the serene feeling of the park itself; to put a parking lot entrance in the middle of that peaceful street would be a shame.
- (2) It concerns me that mature trees would need to be destroyed in order to make the proposed entrance change.
- (3) Increased traffic on the narrow circular street around Bear Mound Park would be a problematic side effect of moving the entrance across from Campbell. Bear Mound is a sacred site. In addition, residents who live in the houses around the mound park their cars along the circle on the one-way street. Therefore heavy traffic there would be both dangerous and culturally insensitive.

Thank you for taking the time to read my comments.

Ka'tya Fassett
1528 Vilas Ave
(608) 886-6551

From: Knepp, Eric
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 10:56 AM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: FW: Entrance to Zoo (proposed change)

From: Stephanie Edwards <stephanie.edwards530@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 10:54 AM
To: Evers, Tag <district13@cityofmadison.com>; Knepp, Eric <EKnepp@cityofmadison.com>; Freiwald, Ann <AFreiwald@cityofmadison.com>; Urban Design Comments <urbandesigncomments@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Entrance to Zoo (proposed change)

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

Good morning-

We want to register our complete opposition to moving the entrance of Vilas/Park Zoo from the Drake/Randall Street intersection. The four-way stop is ideal for slowing down traffic and designed to handle traffic and pedestrians from four directions.

Campbell Street is a completely residential area without the ability to handle large amounts of traffic. It is without consistent sidewalks to allow for safe pedestrian traffic as well. Bear Mound is a sacred site, already compromised paving over effigy mounds and repeated street building. We request a complete topographical and below ground survey of existing archeological sites in and near the Zoo, Vilas Park, and "Dinosaur" park so that no more damage can be done to these historically significant sites.

We submit our opposition to moving the Zoo Entrance from the Drake/Randall intersection. We request a survey of the Zoo/Vilas Park land, of all archeological/First People's sites, be begun and completed, prior to any construction.

Thank you-

David Steingass
Stephanie Edwards

1510 Drake Street
Madison

From: Peggy ROSIN <peggy.rosin@wisc.edu>

Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 11:19 AM

To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>; Evers, Tag <district13@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: Legistar Item # 64455. Vilas Park Master Plan

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

March 9, 2021

Dear Park Commissioners:

I have attended planning meetings regarding the changes proposed and sent several letters. Yet I do not see my most current letter from February 15th letter in consideration for the upcoming meeting. Please add the letter to the Legistar.

March 9, 2021

Dear Vilas Park Master Planners:

Thank you for asking for input to the Vilas Park Master Plan. We have lived in the Vilas Park neighborhood for over 40 years. Over the years, the park attendance has skyrocketed. Attendance at the Zoo is estimated at three quarters of a million people per year. It is difficult to review the Master Plan for Vilas Park without consideration of the Zoo. I feel fortunate to have this beautiful park, Lake Wingra, the UW Arboretum and the Park & Pleasure drive in the neighborhood. It's wonderful. Sharing this with the wider community is the goal of the plan and we support that. I have offered written and verbal comments to the Master plan during the process and appreciate that the plan has morphed to reflect input from the community.

However, my partner, Richard Levinson & I want to support the resistance to moving the Zoo entrance to Campbell Street. We think it is a terrible idea for all the reasons voiced again during our November 11th neighborhood Zoom conversation with Alder Evers & the park commissioner, Eric Knell.

- All three concepts presented in the Master Plan add a new Park gateway to be located at Campbell and Drake Avenues. There were no other options offered, such as

- reconfigure the Drake/Randall entrance. Keep the gateway at Drake and Randall and the existing 4-way stop. The one-way flow through the Park appears to be working.
 - move the main entrance of the zoo to the south side of the park.
 - The additional Campbell gateway will disrupt traffic flow and add congestion to Drake Street.
 - Putting an entrance on Drake and Campbell invites traffic to use the Vilas Circle around Bear Mound Park. This narrow, one-way circle is not intended for heavy traffic and is unsafe. Car & foot traffic circling the Bear Mound park is a definite safety issue. It is a challenge for families with small children & strollers to use the sidewalks and often walk in the road. Also confused drivers often drive in the wrong direction on the one-way street.
 - Current arguments for moving the entrance relate to safety, yet there is no traffic demand plan or accident analysis provide to back up this claim.
 - Encourage the City to issue tickets to those parked illegally in the neighborhood.
 - We support maintaining and adding to the tree canopy to encourage wildlife. The Park redesign is meant to be a place for community where people come together to enjoy nature. Let's honor and promote the natural aspects of the Park.
- Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, we support the requests for a study to prevent further degradation of the effigy mounds in the Park and surrounds prior to disturbing the land further.

Peggy Rosin and Richard Levinson, 1515 Vilas Avenue

From: Anne Forbes <amforbes3@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 12:34 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Vilas Park Master Plan agenda item

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

Greetings!

The final master plans for Vilas Park should be approved with these caveats (or with directions to park staff to go back to the drawing board before approval):

- * A requirement for a traffic study to design the main entrance/exit off of Drake Street
- * A scientific assessment by experts to determine ecologically-based options for the management of the lagoon
- * A recognition that the playground that has been removed from the area of the beach in the final plan represents a failure to address issues of equity (and the related insistence by park staff that they can only support 2 playgrounds in the park)

Thank you,
Anne Frobes

From: Ka'tya Fassett <katyafassett@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 1:10 PM

To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>; Evers, Tag <district13@cityofmadison.com>; Knepp, Eric <EKnepp@cityofmadison.com>; Freiwald, Ann <AFreiwald@cityofmadison.com>; Urban Design Comments <urbandesigncomments@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: agenda item 64455 - lack of parking for the zoo is a problem

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

Today is March 9th and it is a sunny Tuesday afternoon at 12:55 PM. This is the street parking situation directly in front my house right now (note that my driveway is partially blocked). I watched the driver of this black SUV unload a stroller and head in the direction of Vilas Park. Clearly she had nowhere else to park, so she chose to squeeze herself into this spot (I can't really blame her, as I know there is very limited parking near the main entrance to Vilas Zoo on the North side of the park).

I sent an email this morning regarding the problematic parking situation in the Vilas neighborhood on the streets near the zoo, and I want to provide these photos as evidence of the need for additional parking for zoo visitors.

Thank you,
Ka'tya Fassett
1528 Vilas Ave





From: james macdonald <fschmert@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 2:06 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Cc: Evers, Tag <district13@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Vilas Master Plan

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

We are writing you regarding the proposed Vilas Park Master Plan. We have given public testimony on this. We are writing now because the final plan contains elements to which we strongly object. We are familiar with the park because we have lived at the corner of Edgewood and Vilas Avenues for 74 years.

Our concerns are twofold. First, we believe the plan does not consider the needs of many hundreds of current park users. These are the informal users. These users were seldom mentioned at public meetings. They are not part of an organized club, nor are they connected with a designated use area. They bring their own energy to the park and come for something only a park can provide – open grassy spaces. They may bring a picnic blanket, a Frisbee, a book, a dog, or bird glasses. They may simply stroll. What they want is space. By adding many new “things” and specified use areas, the

plan seems to work toward eliminating the open grassy park-like spaces they seek

Secondly, we believe further consideration should be given to the specific effects of some of the plans "improvements". There are a number of conventional "development" aspects of the Master Plan that people automatically connect with a specific result. These will fail in this specific Vilas Park context.

We will focus our comments on the North-West corner of the park, which is between the tennis courts, lagoon, and the stone bridge. We see this section out our living room window and have walked there thousands of times. Informal casual use is the hallmark of this section of the park. It is used by people looking for park-like open space. Many simply stand or sit on the rise at the Northern edge of this section looking at the wide panoramic view of Lake Wingra.

The development committee has said its aim is to promote activities that currently bring people to the park. In this section of the park the plan does exactly the opposite. By adding things, such as parking lots and shelters, it makes most of these informal activities unappealing or impossible.

.

A number of specific things planned for this corner of the park, while good on paper, are likely to fail in this specific context.

Here are some specific examples:

expanded parking lot

Even during the summer of 2020 when COVID had intensified park use, the current lot in this section of the park was seldom, if ever, full. But the Master Plan calls for it to be expanded from 25 to 40 spaces [as per the latest map].

In public meetings it was stated that the additional parking places in this lot are designed for occasional over flow parking. It was also stated that in the Master Plan Vilas Avenue had not been considered for overflow parking. This makes no sense. This Western end of Vilas Avenue can easily accommodate many additional parked cars. It is very convenient to the park. Walking from Vilas Ave to the site of the new parking lot, on a current park path, takes 40 seconds. That is seconds. A number of neighbors said during the public meetings that they would prefer parking on Vilas Ave to an expanded parking lot

So with neighborhood support for overflow parking on a nearby empty street why is the current lot being expanded? Why hasn't Vilas Avenue been considered? This is a waste of money. The new lot will mar a beautiful view and displace park users. There is no justification for this expanded lot when the local streets will suffice.

picnic shelter

A large raised picnic structure is being built in this section's open grassy area. During public meetings this was referred to a number of times as a way of expanding picnicking. It will most likely do exactly the opposite. It will eliminate much lawn where people currently spread blankets to picnic.

Vilas park already has picnic tables under roof cover available in the main park shelter. These are almost never used for picnics. Why would this new shelter be used any more often? Providing a structure for picnicking seems good on paper but it is not appropriate in this situation. Many people who use this neighborhood park prefer to eat on the grass or at one of the many picnic tables in this section under the huge oak trees. This shelter is solving a problem that does not exist. The plan has eliminated more open grass and blocked the view of Lake Wingra. The current area used for picnics will be replaced by a generally unused structure. This decreases picnics. This makes no sense.

Lagoon kayak/canoe launching pier

In the Master Plan the North-West section of the park has a new pier designated for launching small boats such as kayaks and canoes into the lagoon. A 450 foot surfaced path connects it to the parking lot. It will never be used. There is already an existing pier for this purpose, with car access, 200 yards away directly across the lagoon. Why would anyone choose a pier where they must carry their boat 450 feet down a path instead of a nearby one where they put it directly into the water from their car. No one will use it. This pier and its pathway serve no purpose. They only add to the clutter that is overwhelming what was an open grassy part of the park.

Designated lagoon viewing spot

The Master Plan includes a designated lagoon viewing area. Vilas has a very small lagoon. For one-hundred years people have happily viewed the lagoon as they stroll or sit on the grass. This designated spot does not "help" people view this little lagoon. In fact, a designed and built up "viewing spot"

will insulate people from exactly the thing we are hoping to present. This seems more appropriate for an urban park in New York City than a neighborhood park on the near west side of Madison. We would suggest that the objective could be better accomplished by putting a few very heavy wooden chairs beside the lagoon. These could be rearranged but not carried off. They would be much less expensive and more appropriate for the location. They would maintain the open grassy feeling of the park.

Pathways connecting all the additional stuff

Each version of the Master Plan map shows a network of surfaced pathways leading between the new park "features". Their location changes with each map. We have asked repeatedly but have never been told exactly how these will be surfaced. People stroll across the grass in this section of the park because it is relaxing, pleasant, and very easy. They come specifically to walk on the grass. Pathways will not help them. After a very heavy rain some small sections may become a bit soft but people just walk around those spots. The paths are unnecessary. They are an example of landscape pacification. They don't help anyone but they make the park seem less wild, more manageable.

In fact, landscape pacification seems to be one of the underlying themes of the Master Plan in this part of the park. This pacification/urbanization is changing the character of our old open grassy park. The open areas used informally, but frequently, by park visitors are being eliminated. They are replaced by Things and Features many of which are ill considered and many of which will remain unused.

Signed
James MacDonald
Betty MacDonald
(former Madison Park Commission member)

From: lj <upnorth935@outlook.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 4:06 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: agenda item #64455

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

To City of Madison Parks Commissioners:

11/18/2020 Email received from Larry Johns, Oneida Nation, expert in Native American Burial sites and Marker Trees, and has documented many sites throughout Wisconsin. If you have any questions or concerns, Larry is available.

Hey Eileen,

Just a few comments and concerns. All based on my understanding of the map.

First, I really don't like the entrance at Campbell and Drake. I've never lived in the neighborhood but I've certainly been in that neighborhood many, many times either driving, riding a bike or walking. I'm mostly concerned with the summer months when there is a real problem with traffic and parking in the area.

*At such times, it seems to me, there will be an inclination by some to use Campbell St. as a shortcut to and from the north which, of course, will lead to increased traffic around Vilas Circle (Bear Mound Park) And, given the nature of students using the area, they may take additional shortcuts which would be detrimental to historic features on the circle. So for this reason I believe the Campbell St. entrance/exit to the zoo **should not be allowed.***

Second, regarding the mounds on the overlook at Vilas Park. It has been quite a while since I've been to this park but I don't remember a sidewalk or "Overlooks" going around these mounds. If these features exist there is little we can do about that but if they don't this probably isn't a good idea. My reason for this is the possibility of burials existing anywhere outside of the mound group. The Ho Chunk and other peoples would sometimes bury their deceased in and around mounds which is the reason a 5 ft. or 25 ft. setback from development was enacted in Wisconsin and Dane County.

But, if this cannot be done, prior to any digging being done, the area should first be scanned by GPR (ground penetrating radar) and then any digging for the sidewalk and overlooks should be no more than a few inches (less if possible). Any digging should be overseen by a qualified archaeologist and Native familiar with the soils and features at these sites.

Those would be my concerns.

Larry Johns, Oneida Nation

From: HOPE A HAGUE <hahague@wisc.edu>

Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 4:17 PM

To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>; Evers, Tag <district13@cityofmadison.com>; Knepp, Eric <eknepp@cityofmadison.com>; Freiwald, Ann <AFreiwald@cityofmadison.com>; Urban Design Comments <urbandesigncomments@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: Please delete from your plan the proposal to add a zoo entrance opposite Campbell St

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

To the Board of Parks Commission (et al.)

Having made countless left turns into the first driveway on Drake east of Campbell for the last 30 years, I am keenly aware of the traffic situation between Randall and Grant during zoo hours, especially on weekends. Nothing I heard at a recent meeting persuaded me that changing the zoo parking entrance and exit to mid-block would be desirable from ANY point of view.

The city just enhanced safety on this block by adding a sidewalk on the south side, which is heavily used by runners, walkers, and families with strollers. Now they will need to cross at a NEW chaotic intersection??? Now the tiny road around Madison's beautiful sacred Bear Mound will be inundated by drivers from elsewhere who didn't know what they were getting into??? Please, no!

Take a look at the recent satiric poster "Intersections of Madison!" This one would surely deserve to be added to it! Not to mention football weekends.....

I add my voice to others asking that you remove this proposed intersection from the larger Vilas plan. It won't be any more feasible at whatever time the funding becomes available, from a traffic perspective or others such as tree preservation, rain infiltration, and encouraging foot traffic.

Thank you for considering my comment in opposition, based on long experience living on this block.

Hope Hague (and family)
1426 Drake St (since 1991)
