

## AGENDA # 2

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	<b>PRESENTED:</b> March 7, 2007	
TITLE: Adopting the Monroe Street Commercial District Plan. (05720)	<b>REFERRED:</b>	
	<b>REREFERRED:</b>	
	<b>REPORTED BACK:</b>	
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	<b>ADOPTED:</b>	<b>POF:</b>
DATED: March 7, 2007	<b>ID NUMBER:</b>	

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Members present were: Paul Wagner, Lisa Geer, Robert March, Bruce Woods, Todd Barnett, Cathleen Feland, Lou Host-Jablonski and Michael Barrett.

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of March 7, 2007, the Urban Design Commission **RECOMMENDED ADOPTION** of the Monroe Street Commercial District Plan. Appearing on behalf of the project was Julia Kerr. Appearing neither in support nor opposition to the plan was Dan Sebald. Julia Kerr of the Vilas Neighborhood Association and member of the Monroe Street Commercial District Plan Steering Committee provided an overview of the Monroe Street Commercial District Plan, in conjunction with William Fruhling, Principal Planner. It was noted that the plan would be considered by the Plan Commission at its meeting of March 19, 2007, followed by Common Council consideration on March 27, 2007. Kerr noted that the plan was a grassroots effort, in conjunction with the Dudgeon-Monroe and Vilas Neighborhood Associations and the Monroe Street Merchants Association. The development of the plan was facilitated by a planning grant. It was noted that the plan generally supports 2-3 story structures, low scale commercial growth, along with the desire to establish an urban design district. Following the review of highlights of the plan, discussion focused on the following:

- Issues with current projects such as the “Field House Station” and Corcoran project (2600 Block of Monroe Street) was discussed as to their relevancy and consistency with the plan. Kerr noted that with the Field House Station project, the neighborhood has emphasized its interest for the project’s conformance with the plan. Relevant to the Corcoran project, it was noted that although the plan supports 2-3 story development that provisions within the plan allow for greater flexibility in considering additional stories and density based on the relative merits of the project. It was further emphasized that general sections of the plan according to Fruhling create an out for options for greater densities and height generally referred to in specific areas of the plan.
- Issue of keeping parking on Monroe Street 24/7 without peak and rush hour restrictions appears not to be covered within the plan. There appears to be a contradiction that encourages more parking over the goals of the plan to preserve existing development.
- The plan does not emphasize the utilization of classic façade design features that activate commercial activity at the street. Kerr believes that the plan does so at a micro level under certain provisions.
- The plan misses the connecting of open spaces such as around Wingra School with open spaces across Monroe Street such as the Arboretum and area parks; the plan needs more intense study of providing

more connectivity. The plan should be corrected to note that lands adjacent to Wingra School are City-owned by not yet City parklands.

Dan Sebald spoke on issues with the Monroe Commons project relevant to materials, construction and drainage, as well as not liking the stepbacks.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Woods, seconded by Host-Jablonski, the Urban Design Commission **RECOMMENDED ADOPTION** the Monroe Street Commercial District Plan. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (8-0). The motion recommending adoption requested that staff and the neighborhood look at further examining the comments of the Commission and this report as they affect the plan.

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall ratings for this project are 5, 6, 7, 7, 7, 8 and 9.

**URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: Monroe Street Commercial District Plan**

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	9

General Comments:

- Good, grassroots work by all accounts. There needs to be clarity, however, on potential conflict areas, vis-à-vis in-progress projects vs. this plan.
- Address connection across Monroe from the Dudgeon Center and its adjacent neighborhood use park areas to the Arboretum. These important open spaces need a more fluid, safe connection.
- An average plan for an exceptional, classic neighborhood business district. Pedestrians should be central, not “balanced” with other modes. For instance, the plan completely fails to address the speedway nature of Monroe during rush hour. Eliminating rush hour restrictions would not only facilitate ped crossing, it would help solve the parking “problem” during rush hour, which is also a peak retail hour. The plan also fails to address classic retail entry treatment to facilitate an active transition between the public right-of-way and the building (with an emphasis on the window shopping experience). It also fails to address the importance of substantial awnings that overhang the sidewalk (as opposed to the skimpy awnings found in strip malls). Finally, in the first pages of the plan there is an acknowledgement that knocking down buildings to build parking is self-defeating. But on page 50, the plan calls for exactly that: more surface parking!
- Kudos.