

**Miller, Nicole**

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**From:** Chas Karch <chas.c.karch@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 30, 2024 7:05 AM  
**To:** Park Commission  
**Subject:** Olbrich Park Playground Removal  
**Attachments:** Letter to BPC.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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

Dear Park Commissioners,

Please see my attached letter on the removal of the Olbrich Park Playground.

Sincerely,  
Chas Karch

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**Charles Karch**

3130 Lakeland Ave  
Madison, WI, 53704  
(920)-475-4394  
[chas.c.karch@gmail.com](mailto:chas.c.karch@gmail.com)

1st April, 2024

**Board of Park Commissioners**

Parks Lakeside Offices  
330 E. Lakeside St  
Madison, WI, 53715

Dear Park Commissioners,

I am writing today to state my concerns about the nature play area project at Olbrich Park, and the conduct of Parks staff during said project, as a public comment for the April 3rd meeting of your body. In this letter I will do my best to document the facts objectively. I am drawing on my personal experiences as well as city records obtained through requests. While my main concern is that the plan for this playground replacement was always to leave the park without a playground for one year, I will not focus on that, but instead how the process has played out from the viewpoint of neighbors.

As you are probably aware, the previous playground at the west end of the park near the sledding hill was unexpectedly removed on July 5th, 2023. Myself and my neighbors were completely unaware that the playground was going to be removed, there had been no mention of it during public input meetings held for the bike path project in the park. This despite the fact that the playground came up as part of the discussion with Parks staff. According to public records the first mention of the removal of the playground occurred on March 28th, 2023 in an email from Parks staff included below:

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**From:** Freiwald, Ann

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 28, 2023 4:51 PM

**To:** Bergmann, Richard ; Kaniewski, Adam B

**Subject:** Olbrich Playground Removal

I wonder if it would make sense to remove that playground right before Huston gets started on the removal of Lakeland Ave and the install of the new path? Then we will have a "clean slate" to do our nature play area install next year.

BUT if we decide to do this, we should inform the neighbors that we are pulling that out.

Let's discuss.

**Ann Freiwald, PLA**

Planning and Development Manager

City of Madison Parks Division

330 East Lakeside Street

Madison, WI 53715

[afreiwald@cityofmadison.com](mailto:afreiwald@cityofmadison.com)

T: 608-243-2848

After sending an email to the Alders for District 6 and 15 on May 16th, 2023 the following email was sent by Parks staff outlining the plan for removal. He mentions that it should be coordinated with the bike path project and that it will be replaced with turf, which I want to point out has still not happened.

**From:** [Kaniewski, Adam B](#)  
**To:** [Gehin, Greg](#)  
**Cc:** [Freiwald, Ann](#); [Bergmann, Richard](#)  
**Subject:** Olbrich Park Playground Removal  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023 4:04:06 PM

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Hi Greg,

Ann and I mentioned this to Rich today as we met to walk the Elver disc golf re-route, but wanted to also inform you so we are all in the loop. We would like to have the playground at Olbrich Park (the one by the lake) removed within the next 2-4 weeks while other construction activities are taking place in the area. Access will need to be coordinated with the Atwood Ave. project contractor, RG Huston. The playground area can be restored to turf. We will then be implementing a nature play area in the vicinity, likely next year.

Thanks,

**Adam Kaniewski, PLA, CPSI** (he/him/his)

City of Madison Parks Division

330 E. Lakeside St.

Madison, WI 53715

[akaniewski@cityofmadison.com](mailto:akaniewski@cityofmadison.com)

T: 608-261-4281

After an email to the SASY and Eastmorland Neighborhood Associations on June 8th, 2023, Parks went ahead with the removal. No postcards were sent to neighbors, no signs were posted at the playground, and no planning steps for the replacement were taken. The playground was removed, but not until July 5th, 2023, after the new bike path was installed. Below are emails from Parks staff stating that the removal would be going forward despite the fact the path was already completed.

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**From:** [Freiwald, Ann](#)  
**To:** [Genin, Greg](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Olbrich PG demo  
**Date:** Monday, June 26, 2023 8:48:02 AM

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Good morning Greg, just making sure you know about this project for Rich . I was a little disappointed it did not get done before the pavement was placed. Here's hoping he can get the playground out of there without damaging the brand new pavement.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Freiwald, Ann"  
**Date:** June 26, 2023 at 8:46:36 AM CDT  
**To:** "Kaniewski, Adam B"  
**Cc:** "Bergmann, Richard"  
**Subject:** Re: Olbrich PG demo

And, please do not damage the new pavement. If you can figure out a way around it that would be great. It's not like you're going to kill any grass out there.

Sent from my iPhone

After the removal I contacted Parks to ask what happened to the playground and if it was going to be replaced. I got the standard response from Parks staff about the playground replacement schedule and the location of nearby "post and platform" playgrounds. I sent the below reply on July 7th, 2023 expressing my concerns, which did not receive a reply. This is a recurring theme throughout this project, Parks staff leaving questions or concerns from community members unanswered.

**From:** [Sally and Chas](#)  
**To:** [Kaniewski, Adam B](#)  
**Cc:** [Chas.c.karch@gmail.com](mailto:Chas.c.karch@gmail.com); [Madison Parks](#)  
**Subject:** Re: General Park Inquiry  
**Date:** Friday, July 7, 2023 9:36:58 AM

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Hi Adam,

Thank you for the information. This is a huge disappointment for us as we play at this playground most every day. I do not feel we were told this would be taken away when we reviewed the park plans. The park feels very unfriendly to young children at this time with the new bike path going through the middle with fast bikes and now no playground or swings to play. Very disappointed and sad to no longer have a safe and fun spot to take our children to play there and enjoy the water.

Chas and Sally

Several other neighbors also emailed in concerns to Parks. Staff worked on coordinating responses and communicating the reasons for the removal as well as the removal of several trees. There was also a post on the SASY Facebook page asking for more information. Neighborhood Association board

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members and Alders replied to that post, but Parks did not make any statements. They were aware and described it as “chatter.” In the below email dated July 12th, 2023 Adam Kaniewski first created the project page to inform the public about the project. Please note this is one week after removal.

**From:** [Gaebler, Phil](#)  
**To:** [Kaniewski, Adam B](#); [Freiwald, Ann](#); [Kane, Kathleen](#); [Shea, Ann](#)  
**Cc:** [Zwieg, Andrew](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Olbrich Park playground  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 12, 2023 10:13:24 AM

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I might be nice to add a link to the engineering project page as this is a page many have been going to for information.

**From:** Kaniewski, Adam B  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 12, 2023 10:13 AM  
**To:** Freiwald, Ann ; Kane, Kathleen ; Gaebler, Phil ; Shea, Ann  
**Cc:** Zwieg, Andrew  
**Subject:** RE: Olbrich Park playground

I am also aware of the facebook chatter and have had dialogue with some neighbors. I created a project page to try to help clear things up.  
<https://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/projects/olbrich-park-nature-play-area>  
Adam

Concerned neighbors then invite Parks to attend the next SASY NA board meeting to address concerns about the unexpected removal of the playground. Below is an email from Ann Friewald dated July 12th, 2023 discussing preparation for that meeting. As you can see it appears that there had not been much planning for the nature play area as she mentions such basic things as searching for images of other nature playgrounds. She also mentions that neighbors are interested in a swing set which is an important point that will come up again.

**From:** [Freiwald, Ann](#)  
**To:** [Kaniewski, Adam B](#)  
**Subject:** Olbrich Playground Next Steps  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 12, 2023 3:30:41 PM

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Hello Adam, Here are couple tasks that I think will help us with the planning of the nature play area. Gather up a few pics of nature play areas. Include some of Slater and Brittingham for existing ones, (ask other staff if there are others I am not thinking of). Ask Tanya for some pics of nature play areas. And seek out a few of your own. Then lets look them over together. I want to share photos that will inspire, but I also do not want to over promise or share something we are not in the position to do. I have a strong feeling that the group will want a swing set. So, I am going to bounce that off of Rich and Andy now. I am inclined to say yes to a small swing set and a porch swing. And even PIP under the swings so Andy and Rich do not have to refill the safety surfacing on the regular. AND better HC access. Write up an outline of the planned public engagement for the nature area planning and when that might take place “Fall 2023” or “Spring 2024” is sufficient. I want to put some info together to share with SASY, the two alders, and the Hudson Park Friends group, and I would like to do this before I meet with the SASY group on August 10<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.  
Ann

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The first public input meeting was held on 11/28/23 and two proposed plans were shared with the community. Fundraising for a swingset was discussed. Below is an email after that meeting from the Superintendent to staff and the Alder discussing the project as well as a fundraising proposal to raise money for both the Olrich playground and to match with funding for another park. The Superintendent states "That is a great sentiment and idea, but in this case I'm not so sure it makes sense." He does not elaborate on why.

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**From:** Knepp, Eric  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 28, 2023 1:57 PM  
**To:** Freiwald, Ann; Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina; Laschinger, Lisa; Zastrow, Tanya A; Kaniewski, Adam B  
**Subject:** Nature Play Area @ Olbrich Lakeshore

Lisa - can you set up a meeting with those listed here to discuss the Olbrich Nature Play Area? Preferably in the next 2 weeks. I expect at the meeting tonight there will be a push to add more equipment. I don't think this is a good thing to do, but it would be good for us to have a conversation on how to share/sell the vision of what could be. There are also neighbors who are indicating they would raise the funds to install equipment AND provide commensurate funds for a less fortunate area. That is a great sentiment and idea, but in this case I'm not so sure it makes sense. Ann could you confirm what the total cost is for install of a structured playground at this point for the group?

At the first meeting on 11/28/23 Parks staff communicated that the next public input meeting would be held in January or February 2024. On 2/3/24 I sent the message below to ask about the meeting. I received detailed and prompt replies from Parks staff and the second meeting was scheduled for March 11th, 2024.

**From:** [Sally and Chas](#)  
**To:** [Kaniewski, Adam B](#)  
**Subject:** Olbrich Park Playground Meeting  
**Date:** Saturday, February 3, 2024 8:04:36 PM

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

Hi Adam,

I was wondering if you know when the second public meeting on the new playground will be? If I remember correctly at the last meeting it was mentioned the next meeting would be in January or February. I checked the project website and it doesn't have a date, so figured I would ask you.

Thanks,  
Chas Karch

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At the second public input meeting on 3/11/24 Parks staff shared the latest plan for the play area which included the option for a swingset provided through fundraising. At this meeting neighbors, including myself, advocated for including the swingset in exchange for some of the nature play elements that then could be provided for through fundraising. Parks staff was initially opposed to the idea and at one point stated "We can put in the swing set and remove all of the nature play aspects if that's what you want" which was shocking to most of the people in attendance. Discussion resumed and the meeting ended with the understanding that Parks staff would decide on which pieces to switch for the swingset and share that plan back with the neighborhood.

That plan was shared by email from Parks on (xx/xx/xxx) but it was shared in a different manner. Individual attendees were blind-copied so it was unclear who all was included on the email. Additionally, many pieces of nature play were removed to include the swingset and two porch swings. By my best estimate about \$17,000 of equipment was removed to insert a two-swing T-bag swingset that Parks staff had stated would cost around \$10,000. This struck myself and other neighbors as an unfair trade due to the large difference in estimated costs.

The rest of the events after that email were included in an email chain I forwarded to the Board of Park Commissioners. I do not need to summarize it here as it would be best for the Commissioners to read it themselves to understand what took place. This concludes my review of the Olbrich Park playground removal and planning for the replacement nature play area up to this point. I ask that the Commissioners please read through this as well as that recent email chain to best understand what took place.

Thank you for your time and for your work on the Board. I look forward to sharing my public comment with you on April 3rd at the next meeting. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Chas Karch

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Internal communications show that Parks staff were not all clear on the reasons for removal and viewed neighbors who voiced concerns as unreasonable and they should spend their time focusing on the “80% who will listen to reason.”

Hi Ann,

Out of curiosity and in case I get asked the question, what was the reasoning for not replacing the playground at Olbrich Lakeland? Some of my staff are wondering as well. I apologize if you’ve already communicated this but I do not recall. Thanks.

Spencer



**Spencer Werner**  
East Parks Supervisor  
City of Madison Parks  
Sycamore Maintenance Facility  
(608) 246-4510  
[swerner@cityofmadison.com](mailto:swerner@cityofmadison.com)

**From:** Freiwald, Ann

**Sent:** Friday, July 14, 2023 12:05 PM

**To:** Werner, Spencer ; Kaniewski, Adam B

**Subject:** RE: Olbrich Tree Removal Information

I hear you. For some people, facts do not really matter. But we have to focus on the 80% who will listen to reason, when we can.

Ann

A few days later in response to a follow-up email from Alder Martinez-Rutherford the following communication was sent to Parks Superintendent Eric Knepp. In this email the concerns of neighbors is described as “angst” and then details how to “sell” nature play and states “I feel strongly we should not give in on the playground structure ... However, I am open to a swing set.” This swing set will come up again in the future.



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**From:** [Freiwald, Ann](#)  
**To:** [Knepp, Eric](#)  
**Cc:** [Laschinger, Lisa](#); [Rvan, CJ](#); [Genin, Greg](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Concerns about Olbrich Park Changes  
**Date:** Monday, August 7, 2023 2:13:31 PM  
**Attachments:** [Precedent Images Olbrich.pdf](#)  
[Olbrich Park Nature Play Public Engagement.docx](#)

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The path was designed so that the path can be plowed and the sledders can sled. We actually sent a surveyor out there to map the longest path created by sledding and brought to path around the end of it. However, I do think some sledders will run into the path, it is bound to happen. I made the argument that we should not plow this path due to its low use by winter bikers and its high use by sledders. I lost that argument. TE is fully expecting this path to be plowed.

As to the playground. Our plan is to replace this playground with a nature play area. I am attending a SASY meeting on Thursday. I expect I will receive some angry feedback regarding how the neighborhood was not informed regarding the removal. We did send emails to the alders and to SASY, but the word did not get spread.

After folks have gotten their angst out, I am going to share the schedule for the planning meetings (attached) and some precedent photos for what "nature play" can mean. I imagine many folks will be upset about the lack of a playground structure and the lack of a swing set. I feel strongly that we should not give in on the playground structure, there are two more of these in this park, one at the school next store and one at Elmside Circle. However, I would be open to a swing set here, if Ops is OK with that. I would think that a swing set is much easier to care for then an entire new playground, and that we can "sell" nature play easier if we have the flexibility to include a swing set.

Thoughts or advice, are welcome.

Ann

In an update provided at the request of Superintendent Knepp Parks staff once again mentions the swing set and states "they are not excited about the nature play, but would be happy (I think) as long as we include some swings."

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**From:** [Freiwald, Ann](#)  
**To:** [Knepp, Eric](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Olbrich playground  
**Date:** Friday, November 3, 2023 9:32:12 AM

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in case you still need it some quick facts:

This is the playground that was located next to the toilet on the lake side by the canoe storage.

It was removed in late summer by Rich's crew

We plan to replace it with nature play area in 2024

The neighbors were very upset at the removal

They are not excited about the nature play, but would be happy (I think) as long as we include some swings.

Adam is working on this and public input starts later this month or early Dec.

Construction next summer.

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**From:** Knepp, Eric  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 2, 2023 2:55 PM  
**To:** Freiwald, Ann  
**Subject:** Olbrich playground

Can you give me a quick scoop on the playground issue?

## Miller, Nicole

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**From:** Sally and Chas <sckarch830@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 22, 2024 7:55 AM  
**To:** Park Commission  
**Subject:** Fwd: Olbrich Nature Play Area Follow-Up

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Board of Park Commissioners,

This email thread highlights some of my concerns around the difference between the two playground replacement projects at Olbrich Park and at Oak Park Heights Park. Specifically the way both projects were treated by Parks staff and Alders. As you can see from the screenshotted email from Superintendent Knepp he was very involved with the Oak Park Heights Park project which leads me to believe he cannot answer my concerns impartially. Which leads me to all of you.

I will hope to make your next meeting in person, but if not could these concerns please be entered into the record.

Sincerely,  
Chas Karch

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Sally and Chas <sckarch830@gmail.com>  
**Date:** Fri, Mar 22, 2024 at 1:35 AM  
**Subject:** Re: Olbrich Nature Play Area Follow-Up  
**To:** <Hilary.Gerstein@alumni.brown.edu>  
**CC:** Carrie H <carriehint@gmail.com>, Allison Trapp <afrapp@gmail.com>, Angie Bobzien <bobzien.angie@gmail.com>, Betty Chewning <betty.chewning@wisc.edu>, Davy Mayer <davymayer@gmail.com>, Freiwald, Ann <AFreiwald@cityofmadison.com>, Kaniewski, Adam B <AKaniewski@cityofmadison.com>, Knepp, Eric <EKnepp@cityofmadison.com>, Laschinger, Lisa <llaschinger@cityofmadison.com>, Lorie Raihala <lraihala@gmail.com>, Marcus Trapp <marcustrapp@gmail.com>, Martin Lichtman <marty.lichtman@gmail.com>, Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina <district15@cityofmadison.com>, Ryan K <608ryan@gmail.com>, Sonia Teas <sjteas@gmail.com>, Tishler, Bill <district11@cityofmadison.com>, Zastrow, Tanya A <tzastrow@cityofmadison.com>, paul\_noeldner@hotmail.com <paul\_noeldner@hotmail.com>, <sfranklin@supportmpf.org>

Hello Superintendent Knepp,

I am still waiting for a response of any kind from you about this. Below is a copy of an email you sent on 10/18/23 regarding the Oak Park Heights Park playground project. This is what I mean when I am saying I have concerns about the very different treatment of these two mistakes. You offer to not only meet with Alder Tishler to discuss, but also attend a Midvale Heights Neighborhood Association meeting and schedule a follow-up meeting with concerned neighbors. Why are you not doing the same for the Olbrich playground? As you can see Lisa and Ann are also included on that email, so I have the same question for both of them.

Alder Martinez-Rutherford, can we please ask that the Parks staff treat our neighborhood and our playground with the same respect they show to Oak Park Heights Park? Once again I am asking that Superintendent Knepp and Assistant

Superintendent Laschinger meet with us in person. If this is not possible I would like to know why and why it was possible for Midvale Heights.

I apologize for the email being in two screenshots. It is late and I did not take the time to fit it all in one. I think it is still legible as is.

Sincerely,  
Chas Karch

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**From:** Knepp, Eric  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 18, 2023 4:22 PM  
**To:** Tishler, Bill; Kane, Kathleen  
**Cc:** Shea, Ann; Freiwald, Ann; Genin, Greg; Ryan, CJ; Laschinger, Lisa; Bergmann, Richard  
**Subject:** Re: Jungle Gym Removal at Oak Park Heights Park

Alder Tishler -

We will be in attendance next Tuesday. We are also open to scheduling another meeting after that date with folks who are interested in how to move forward. We will make sure the Tuesday meeting is put on to our calendar of events tomorrow morning.

Here is the statement we intend to use based on your edits:

Madison Parks is working on a Playground Improvements project ([insert project hyperlink](#)) at Oak Park Heights Park (aka Piper Park). The project's aim was to modernize and update ageing equipment and to promote accessibility across our immense park playground system. Parks had planned to preserve the older metal jungle gym feature at the park. Due to internal miscommunication, the jungle gym, along with the other ageing equipment, was removed on October 16th. The equipment was deconstructed in a manner that makes re-installation

infeasible. Parks sincerely regrets this mistake and recognizes the negative impact this has on the neighborhood. Parks has been in contact with Alder Tishler and he has expressed his frustration with the situation. As a part of the conversation with the Alder, it was determined that the next step for Parks will be to attend the Midvale Heights NA meeting on Tuesday, October 24th. At that meeting, Parks staff will be prepared to share some thoughts on what could be done to mitigate the mistake, and most importantly, are open to hearing ideas from neighbors about what positive steps we can take together from here.

It would be good to connect tomorrow or Friday about what is possible/feasible here as a way to make up for the mistake. When would be a good time to chat via phone or zoom? I do want to be clear that I do not see any path for restoration of the exact structure.

Again, I'm sorry this happened and recognize that it makes your job much harder to do.

Thanks,  
Eric

On Thu, Mar 21, 2024 at 1:23 AM Hilary Gerstein <[hisly9@gmail.com](mailto:hisly9@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Thanks for this Carrie!

1) Carrie, you're definitely asking the right question (as it's the question I had too), hopefully Adam can answer it when he has a chance. That goes along with Chas's really well worded similar question: *"According to the attached fundraising price list from Ann, along with the information from the second public input meeting, there is about \$17,000 worth of features that have been removed from the previous plan in order to include the t-bar swingset. Is that approximately the cost of the t-bar swings? If not, why has that much been removed? If so, why were we told \$10,000 in various communications from Parks around the swingset?"*

I assume something changed or there was a new estimate somewhere? I'm sure Adam and folks can tell us the details.

2) I just wanted to say that I think Adam has done a great job here. Assuming that elements did have to be removed, I do think that the stump circle and the tree trunk thingie are the least interesting and least compelling items (both of those exist at Lowell nearby and I can say from experience that my kids like them but not as much as the items that remain) so it made sense for those to be deprioritized in favor of the swings in this iteration of the plan.

3) Thanks again Chas for being such a fervent advocate for our neighborhood! Some of those new people that you've added seem like really inspired choices and good ideas. If we are indeed able to make an on site meeting with Parks happen, Marty or I will definitely be there (assuming we are in town - we will be going to visit my parents for a few days of MMSD spring break).

I'm excited at the progress that is happening, let's keep it going!  
-Hilary

On Thu, Mar 21, 2024 at 1:17 AM Sally and Chas <[sckarch830@gmail.com](mailto:sckarch830@gmail.com)> wrote:

My apologies for the second email. Copying Superintendent Knepp as I originally intended to.

On Thu, Mar 21, 2024 at 1:10 AM Sally and Chas <[sckarch830@gmail.com](mailto:sckarch830@gmail.com)> wrote:

Hi All,

Thank you Carrie for sending this back out to the list of neighbors. I also wonder if there are some people missing from this. Adam who else was bcc'd on your email? I know there were people at the meeting not included in this group. I've added in Superintendent Knepp who I left a message with yesterday asking if he can answer some questions I have about this project. I would greatly appreciate if he could be in attendance along with our Alder at the on-site meeting we have been trying to set up with Lisa and the team.

I once again find myself losing sleep over this project, and confused about how we have gotten here. According to the attached fundraising price list from Ann, along with the information from the second public input meeting, there is about \$17,000 worth of features that have been removed from the previous plan in order to include the t-bar swingset. Is that approximately the cost of the t-bar swings? If not, why has that much been removed? If so, why were we told \$10,000 in various communications from Parks around the swingset?

I also once again find myself confused about the process for this playground replacement compared to the one at Oak Park Heights Park or "Piper" Park. I've copied in Laurie Raihala from the Midvale Heights Neighborhood Association who I have spoken with about that project. I also copied the SASY NA president Ryan and Vice President Davy and Alder Tishler who I have communicated with about this as well. I'm currently still going through the hundreds of pages of records I recently received about that project, but at this point I have four main questions:

1. Why was Superintendent Knepp so personally involved in the Piper Park project, especially after the accidental removal, while we have not heard anything from him on our project?
2. Why was the Midvale Heights NA told there could not be fundraising for their project, while we are being required to fundraise?
3. Why are they being given a full replacement piece of equipment to make up for the miscommunication and accidental removal of one piece of equipment and we are not being offered any such deal even though our entire playground was removed unexpectedly and Parks staff has admitted there were mistakes made in our project?
4. Why did the Piper Park project get a third planning meeting, after the accidental removal, while we are not being given a third meeting even though we've been asking for an on-site meeting with staff to try and repair trust with the neighbors?

Please help me understand, I do not have the view of Parks from the inside like you all do. I just know that what I see strikes me as unfair, and confusingly different. Especially the differing communications around fundraising. I'm also copying in Paul Noeldner who I spoke to recently after seeing his comments at the most recent Board of Parks Commissioners meeting. His organization Madison Friends of Urban Nature seems like one that could help us especially given their interest in involving kids in nature and the fact this is a nature play area. I'm also copying in the director of Olbrich Gardens Tanya Zastrow who I've spoken with about this project, given her extensive background in nature play. She recently gave me some good leads on possible sources of grants for fundraising that I'd like to discuss. Finally, I've copied in Stephanie the director of the Madison Parks Foundation to help since it seems like our fundraising responsibilities are growing in regards to this project.

I would like to ask again for an on-site meeting with Parks staff. It's been 8 months and 15 days since the playground was removed, and the site still sits largely unchanged, including the large pieces of plastic trash embedded in the pea gravel leftover from removal. I'd like to ask all Parks staff and the alders if it is acceptable to leave an area without a playground for this long, especially in such bad condition. I have a hard time imagining this would be allowed to happen at other parks like Piper Park or Vilas Park where the planned removal of an equally outdated playground is on indefinite hold for an "archeological survey".

I am a huge fan of Madison Parks in general, our family used to say that if a day went by where we didn't set foot in a Madison Park it was a day wasted. Now, after this playground removal, we find ourselves driving to other parks,

including lakeside parks in Monona or parks with nature playgrounds such as CamRock County Park. I'm hoping that we can once again find enjoyment at our local park and playground on the water. We, like many of our neighbors, pay high property taxes on our homes to live in this neighborhood, close to this park which had a playground when we bought our house. We have not used that playground in almost a year since the demolition of Lakeland Ave in the park began last year and we were cut off. Given the recent Parks staff comments surrounding the timeline for this project I have to assume we will go another year without a playground, but I hope that I am wrong.

Thank you all for your time reading this long email. I appreciate the work everyone included has done for Madison Parks in general and for the Olbrich Park Nature Play Area specifically. I hope we can rebuild the trust that has been lost with the community.

Sincerely,  
Chas Karch

On Wed, Mar 20, 2024 at 3:27 PM Carrie H <[carriehint@gmail.com](mailto:carriehint@gmail.com)> wrote:

Hi Adam,

I'm responding about your new playground proposal (with feedback due by 3/31) to this thread so all the neighbors can see each other's responses to the plan (I also included the PDF of the plan here for reference, as well as the previous plan we discussed on the recent zoom meeting)!

I appreciate you putting this together and I think it looks good. I am a bit surprised that four features needed to come out (two bench swings, the tree stump circle, and the tree trunk feature) but we didn't see the price list, and I definitely don't know the price of a tree trunk feature;) Anyway, my main question is, we were told we would need to raise about \$10k for the two bay swing set, if we are able to raise \$10k, can we get all four eliminated pieces added (not to impact the implementation timing of this plan, it would be a step two for the near future)?

Thanks so much and I look forward to seeing this playground go in!

Thanks,  
Carrie

On Sat, Mar 16, 2024 at 12:50 AM Sally and Chas <[sckarch830@gmail.com](mailto:sckarch830@gmail.com)> wrote:

Hi Lisa,

Thank you for the update, looking forward to seeing Adams new proposal. We would still like an on-site meeting, I believe it will be helpful for you to see the site as it is currently. That is how it has looked since 7/5/23 and I hope that it can be improved as soon as possible.

Do you have any specific times the week of 4/1 that work for you? Otherwise I can find a time that works for the neighbors.

Best regards,  
Chas

On Fri, Mar 15, 2024 at 3:16 PM Laschinger, Lisa <[LLaschinger@cityofmadison.com](mailto:LLaschinger@cityofmadison.com)> wrote:

Good Afternoon Chas,

Thank you for reaching out and for your continued engagement in this process.

I do want to provide you with a project update. I spoke with both Adam and Ann on Tuesday to discuss potential solutions based on the input received at Monday's meeting. Please note, I'm including them along with Alder Martinez-Rutherford. Adam has been working to refine the plan this week and plans to have it available on the website early next week. Adam is working to propose an option that will swap some of the nature play and porch swings with a swing set, which we believe will balance the requests from the public input we received, provide meaningful nature play opportunities and allow for additional fundraising opportunities. In general, the larger nature area will stay as proposed with a separate swing set area. I think you will be happy with the revised plan.

If you think it is still necessary to meet after you see the plan, we can set something up for the week of April 1. I do know there is a desire to have the area restored as soon as possible, and I think we have a path to do that.

Have a great weekend!

Lisa

Lisa Laschinger

Assistant Parks Superintendent

City of Madison Parks Division

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**From:** Sally and Chas <[sckarch830@gmail.com](mailto:sckarch830@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, March 15, 2024 1:32 PM

**To:** Laschinger, Lisa <[LLaschinger@cityofmadison.com](mailto:LLaschinger@cityofmadison.com)>

**Cc:** Allison Trapp <[aftrapp@gmail.com](mailto:aftrapp@gmail.com)>; Angie Bobzien <[bobzien.angie@gmail.com](mailto:bobzien.angie@gmail.com)>; Betty Chewning <[betty.chewning@wisc.edu](mailto:betty.chewning@wisc.edu)>; Carrie Hinterthuer <[carriehint@gmail.com](mailto:carriehint@gmail.com)>; Hilary Gerstein <[hisly9@gmail.com](mailto:hisly9@gmail.com)>; Marcus Trapp <[marcustrapp@gmail.com](mailto:marcustrapp@gmail.com)>; Martin Lichtman <[marty.lichtman@gmail.com](mailto:marty.lichtman@gmail.com)>; Sonia Teas <[siteas@gmail.com](mailto:siteas@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** Olbrich Nature Play Area Follow-Up

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

Hi Lisa,

I wanted to follow-up with you about a couple of things. First, the on-site meeting with neighbors, would you be able to do that next week? Second, deciding on the changes necessary to include the swingset in the plans. I've included the involved neighbors on this email and we've agreed we can probably work that out with Adam by email in order to save everyone time and keep the project going forward.

Please let me know your thoughts and have a good weekend.

Best,

Chas



## Miller, Nicole

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**From:** Sally and Chas <sckarch830@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 23, 2024 8:27 AM  
**To:** Park Commission  
**Subject:** Fwd: Olbrich Nature Play Area Follow-Up

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Commissioners,

I'd like to submit the Superintendent's response. Especially everything after the line "Here is what the team is not going to do". This will be part of that I comment on at the next meeting. At this point I am frustrated enough I will do everything I can to make sure I am there in person. I look forward to sharing my thoughts with you and Superintendent Knepp then.

Sincerely,  
Chas Karch

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Knepp, Eric** <EKnepp@cityofmadison.com>  
**Date:** Fri, Mar 22, 2024 at 5:10 PM  
**Subject:** RE: Olbrich Nature Play Area Follow-Up  
**To:** Sally and Chas <sckarch830@gmail.com>, Hilary.Gerstein@alumni.brown.edu <Hilary.Gerstein@alumni.brown.edu>  
**CC:** Carrie H <carriehint@gmail.com>, Allison Trapp <afrapp@gmail.com>, Angie Bobzien <bobzien.angie@gmail.com>, Betty Chewning <betty.chewning@wisc.edu>, Davy Mayer <davymayer@gmail.com>, Freiwald, Ann <AFreiwald@cityofmadison.com>, Kaniewski, Adam B <AKaniewski@cityofmadison.com>, Laschinger, Lisa <LLaschinger@cityofmadison.com>, Lorie Raihala <lraihala@gmail.com>, Marcus Trapp <marcustrapp@gmail.com>, Martin Lichtman <marty.lichtman@gmail.com>, Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina <district15@cityofmadison.com>, Ryan K <608ryan@gmail.com>, Sonia Teas <sjteas@gmail.com>, Tishler, Bill <district11@cityofmadison.com>, Zastrow, Tanya A <TZastrow@cityofmadison.com>, paul\_noeldner@hotmail.com <paul\_noeldner@hotmail.com>, Franklin, Stephanie <sfranklin@supportmpf.org>

Greetings Chas and other interested folks –

I have been following the situation at Olbrich and have confidence in the team working on this project. I just left a voicemail or two with you Chas as I was hoping to get a better understanding on a few of your questions prior to responding. I am especially concerned with your expression of distrust with the Parks Division. The collective of folks working here strive to meet an aspirational vision of an ideal system of parks. We certainly make our share of mistakes in doing so, but I can confidently say that the team of folks you have been engaged with are highly competent professionals who strive to make great things happen within finite resources, including their time. Our goal here has been to bring a first of its kind innovative nature inspired play area to Olbrich Park overlooking beautiful Lake Monona. This would be the first time we have ever installed native plantings within a play area and we are working with the existing beauty of nature in the form of trees to inform the design. I've thought from the beginning this project would be a great fit for this space and I'm saddened that we are not doing enough to articulate the benefits of this investment.

In short (yes, this is the short version), here is what we are going to do:

- Make a very slight modification to the plan that is published on the [Project Page](#) to clarify one aspect. The City is positioned to move forward with everything on this plan at City expense, except one of the two bench/swing locations (identified as #11 on the plan).
  - **We would love to hear comments over the next week regarding the desirability of which of the two locations would be preferred for a bench or porch swing... and whether folks would prefer one or the other** (take it for what it is, which is my opinion, a porch swing facing the play area and lake would be a phenomenal addition to the park). **These comments can be directed to Adam as have other design based comments.**
  - We are certainly not certain that we have this figured out on project costs here, as this will be a first for us at it relates to significant sizable investment in innovative nature based play elements, but in reviewing it we are going to take the risk that we can deliver the above for \$50K or less. The slides will be a first of their kind in our system and certainly be a five figure expense, so will the swingset, as well as the paths. We are more than happy to report on the final costs here, but I cannot commit to doing more than the above for the budget we have to work with.
  - If there are desires for fundraising additional elements (the other bench or swing... or maybe more nature based play?) we are open to that conversation, but unless the fundraising occurred in relative short order OR we delayed the project build, it would likely need to be a part of a future phase of work.
- We would like to construct this over the summer and have it fully installed this year. We would then maintain it into the future (the maintenance and audit standards are different from a playground, but that does not mean we will not maintain this area).
- Going forward, in the interest of efficient use of City resources, I will be the primary point of contact for all of your questions. Given the desire for my engagement on the project, it makes sense to me that I would relieve others of the need to focus their time on this matter. Adam will remain as the project manager, but all other staff who have been contacted, copied, and called have been directed to forward communications and questions on to me moving forward. I will state here that I tend to have between 28-35 hours of meetings and phone calls scheduled a week or so in advance, so my response time as primary contact may sometimes lag a bit beyond what I wish it did. I believe we are approaching \$10K in staff time on this issue and I cannot justify more than is needed moving forward. In a world where Parks receives, all in, about \$260 annually for capital and operating expenses in taxes on the average value home, I have to try to identify ways to be as efficient as we can be.
- I, most likely alone, will meet with the neighborhood association (preferred) or just a group of folks who care a lot, on site at some point in April. This would need to be after April 15th at this point, given my vacation schedule and corresponding return to work priorities. The biggest one being the ever challenging decisions that need to be made related to the 2025 Capital Budget that is due on April 19<sup>th</sup> and the week before that is a big one for me. If someone wants to take the lead on suggesting 2-4 times the week of the 15<sup>th</sup>, I'll do everything I can to make one work.

Here is what the team is not going to do, but I am willing and excited to discuss when we meet:

- Reconsider the decision to focusing on promoting nature based play areas in this site instead of a "classic playground."
  - We are committed to working to create unique and nature focused play elements in our system and this location is optimal for this for a variety of reasons. Not the least of which is that EVERYONE
- Seek additional funding beyond the project budget of \$50K

- Expend resources to explain the differences between this situation and the situation at Oak Park Heights in detail from multiple staff perspectives. They are very different situations for a multitude of reasons. Here are a few, and I can discuss at length when we meet:
  - At Oak Park Heights Park the mistake was to do the thing we expressly had agreed to not do. That is significantly different than a suboptimal communication plan around removal of a playground. The removal at Olbrich was intended and authorized to be done before the path got done. That obviously is not how it played out. However, there was no equipment that we would have contemplated allowing to stay at Olbrich.
  - My level of involvement that Chas mentions is simply related to who is tackling what issue of the day. To be clear, I don't spend time on all the issues that come up within our system, even challenging ones. We have many talented leaders who manage situations and issues for the team and I am a believer in creating clear lines of communication and not having 3-6 people trying to figure out whose doing what (see my direction I've given staff regarding point of contact on this project above). I would also note here that I DID NOT attend any meeting in person on this matter.
  - The project budgets ARE different as the Oak Park Heights project is for a playground structure replacement that includes necessary safety surfacing, etc. I will get the numbers for you, but they were not budgeted as the same and were never intended to be the same thing.
  - The service areas for the two playgrounds/play areas are different. Quite substantially. I have not yet run a GIS based analysis, but from just looking at the parcel maps there have to be more than 100 residences that rely almost exclusively on OPH park as their play area within 1/4 (if not 1/2) a mile service area. I don't believe that is true for ANY residences in the case of Olbrich.

I look forward to engaging on this issue and doing everything I can to provide a path forward here together. I look forward to better understanding the concerns and working together to move forward. I know folks care a lot about parks and I'm glad they do, so much better than apathy. So thanks for caring a lot, and I look forward to discussing things moving forward!

Thanks,

**ERIC M. KNEPP**

Parks Superintendent

(608) 266-4711

**MADISON  
PARKS**

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**From:** Sally and Chas <[sckarch830@gmail.com](mailto:sckarch830@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, March 22, 2024 1:36 AM

**To:** [Hilary.Gerstein@alumni.brown.edu](mailto:Hilary.Gerstein@alumni.brown.edu)

**Cc:** Carrie H <[carriehint@gmail.com](mailto:carriehint@gmail.com)>; Allison Trapp <[aftrapp@gmail.com](mailto:aftrapp@gmail.com)>; Angie Bobzien <[bobzien.angie@gmail.com](mailto:bobzien.angie@gmail.com)>; Betty Chewing <[betty.chewing@wisc.edu](mailto:betty.chewing@wisc.edu)>; Davy Mayer <[davymayer@gmail.com](mailto:davymayer@gmail.com)>; Freiwald, Ann <[AFreiwald@cityofmadison.com](mailto:AFreiwald@cityofmadison.com)>; Kaniewski, Adam B <[AKaniewski@cityofmadison.com](mailto:AKaniewski@cityofmadison.com)>; Knepp, Eric <[EKnepp@cityofmadison.com](mailto:EKnepp@cityofmadison.com)>; Laschinger, Lisa <[LLaschinger@cityofmadison.com](mailto:LLaschinger@cityofmadison.com)>; Lorie Raihala <[lraihala@gmail.com](mailto:lraihala@gmail.com)>; Marcus Trapp <[marcustrapp@gmail.com](mailto:marcustrapp@gmail.com)>; Martin Lichtman <[marty.lichtman@gmail.com](mailto:marty.lichtman@gmail.com)>; Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina <[district15@cityofmadison.com](mailto:district15@cityofmadison.com)>; Ryan K <[608ryan@gmail.com](mailto:608ryan@gmail.com)>; Sonia Teas <[sjteas@gmail.com](mailto:sjteas@gmail.com)>; Tishler, Bill <[district11@cityofmadison.com](mailto:district11@cityofmadison.com)>; Zastrow, Tanya A <[TZastrow@cityofmadison.com](mailto:TZastrow@cityofmadison.com)>; paul\_noeldner@hotmail.com; Franklin, Stephanie <[sfranklin@supportmpf.org](mailto:sfranklin@supportmpf.org)>

**Subject:** Re: Olbrich Nature Play Area Follow-Up

Hello Superintendent Knepp,

I am still waiting for a response of any kind from you about this. Below is a copy of an email you sent on 10/18/23 regarding the Oak Park Heights Park playground project. This is what I mean when I am saying I have concerns about the very different treatment of these two mistakes. You offer to not only meet with Alder Tishler to discuss, but also attend a Midvale Heights Neighborhood Association meeting and schedule a follow-up meeting with concerned neighbors. Why are you not doing the same for the Olbrich playground? As you can see Lisa and Ann are also included on that email, so I have the same question for both of them.

Alder Martinez-Rutherford, can we please ask that the Parks staff treat our neighborhood and our playground with the same respect they show to Oak Park Heights Park? Once again I am asking that Superintendent Knepp and Assistant Superintendent Laschinger meet with us in person. If this is not possible I would like to know why and why it was possible for Midvale Heights.

I apologize for the email being in two screenshots. It is late and I did not take the time to fit it all in one. I think it is still legible as is.

Sincerely,

Chas Karch

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**From:** Knepp, Eric  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 18, 2023 4:22 PM  
**To:** Tishler, Bill; Kane, Kathleen  
**Cc:** Shea, Ann; Freiwald, Ann; Genin, Greg; Ryan, CJ; Laschinger, Lisa; Bergmann, Richard  
**Subject:** Re: Jungle Gym Removal at Oak Park Heights Park

Alder Tishler -

We will be in attendance next Tuesday. We are also open to scheduling another meeting after that date with folks who are interested in how to move forward. We will make sure the Tuesday meeting is put on to our calendar of events tomorrow morning.

Here is the statement we intend to use based on your edits:

Madison Parks is working on a Playground Improvements project ([insert project hyperlink](#)) at Oak Park Heights Park (aka Piper Park). The project's aim was to modernize and update ageing equipment and to promote accessibility across our immense park playground system. Parks had planned to preserve the older metal jungle gym feature at the park. Due to internal miscommunication, the jungle gym, along with the other ageing equipment, was removed on October 16th. The equipment was deconstructed in a manner that makes re-installation

infeasible. Parks sincerely regrets this mistake and recognizes the negative impact this has on the neighborhood. Parks has been in contact with Alder Tishler and he has expressed his frustration with the situation. As a part of the conversation with the Alder, it was determined that the next step for Parks will be to attend the Midvale Heights NA meeting on Tuesday, October 24th. At that meeting, Parks staff will be prepared to share some thoughts on what could be done to mitigate the mistake, and most importantly, are open to hearing ideas from neighbors about what positive steps we can take together from here.

It would be good to connect tomorrow or Friday about what is possible/feasible here as a way to make up for the mistake. When would be a good time to chat via phone or zoom? I do want to be clear that I do not see any path for restoration of the exact structure.

Again, I'm sorry this happened and recognize that it makes your job much harder to do.

Thanks,  
Eric

On Thu, Mar 21, 2024 at 1:23 AM Hilary Gerstein <[hisly9@gmail.com](mailto:hisly9@gmail.com)> wrote:

Thanks for this Carrie!

1) Carrie, you're definitely asking the right question (as it's the question I had too), hopefully Adam can answer it when he has a chance. That goes along with Chas's really well worded similar question: *"According to the attached fundraising price list from Ann, along with the information from the second public input meeting, there is about \$17,000 worth of features that have been removed from the previous plan in order to include the t-bar swingset. Is that approximately the cost of the t-bar swings? If not, why has that much been removed? If so, why were we told \$10,000 in various communications from Parks around the swingset?"*

I assume something changed or there was a new estimate somewhere? I'm sure Adam and folks can tell us the details.

2) I just wanted to say that I think Adam has done a great job here. Assuming that elements did have to be removed, I do think that the stump circle and the tree trunk thingie are the least interesting and least compelling items (both of those exist at Lowell nearby and I can say from experience that my kids like them but not as much as the items that remain) so it made sense for those to be deprioritized in favor of the swings in this iteration of the plan.

3) Thanks again Chas for being such a fervent advocate for our neighborhood! Some of those new people that you've added seem like really inspired choices and good ideas. If we are indeed able to make an on site meeting with Parks happen, Marty or I will definitely be there (assuming we are in town - we will be going to visit my parents for a few days of MMSD spring break).

I'm excited at the progress that is happening, let's keep it going!

-Hilary

On Thu, Mar 21, 2024 at 1:17 AM Sally and Chas <[sckarch830@gmail.com](mailto:sckarch830@gmail.com)> wrote:

My apologies for the second email. Copying Superintendent Knepp as I originally intended to.

On Thu, Mar 21, 2024 at 1:10 AM Sally and Chas <[sckarch830@gmail.com](mailto:sckarch830@gmail.com)> wrote:

Hi All,

Thank you Carrie for sending this back out to the list of neighbors. I also wonder if there are some people missing from this. Adam who else was bcc'd on your email? I know there were people at the meeting not included in this group. I've added in Superintendent Knepp who I left a message with yesterday asking if he can answer some questions I have about this project. I would greatly appreciate if he could be in attendance along with our Alder at the on-site meeting we have been trying to set up with Lisa and the team.

I once again find myself losing sleep over this project, and confused about how we have gotten here. According the attached fundraising price list from Ann, along with the information from the second public input meeting, there is about \$17,000 worth of features that have been removed from the previous plan in order to include the t-bar swingset. Is that approximately the cost of the t-bar swings? If not, why has that much been removed? If so, why were we told \$10,000 in various communications from Parks around the swingset?

I also once again find myself confused about the process for this playground replacement compared to the one at Oak Park Heights Park or "Piper" Park. I've copied in Laurie Raihala from the Midvale Heights Neighborhood Association who I have spoken with about that project. I also copied the SASY NA president Ryan and Vice President Davy and Alder Tishler who I have communicated with about this as well. I'm currently still going through the hundreds of pages of records I recently received about that project, but at this point I have four main questions:

1. Why was Superintendent Knepp so personally involved in the Piper Park project, especially after the accidental removal, while we have not heard anything from him on our project?
2. Why was the Midvale Heights NA told there could not be fundraising for their project, while we are being required to fundraise?
3. Why are they being given a full replacement piece of equipment to make up for the miscommunication and accidental removal of one piece of equipment and we are not being offered any such deal even though our entire playground was removed unexpectedly and Parks staff has admitted there were mistakes made in our project?
4. Why did the Piper Park project get a third planning meeting, after the accidental removal, while we are not being given a third meeting even though we've been asking for an on-site meeting with staff to try and repair trust with the neighbors?

Please help me understand, I do not have the view of Parks from the inside like you all do. I just know that what I see strikes me as unfair, and confusingly different. Especially the differing communications around fundraising. I'm also copying in Paul Noeldner who I spoke to recently after seeing his comments at the most recent Board of Parks Commissioners meeting. His organization Madison Friends of Urban Nature seems like one that could help us especially given their interest in involving kids in nature and the fact this is a nature play area. I'm also copying in the director of Olbrich Gardens Tanya Zastrow who I've spoken with about this project, given her extensive background in nature play. She recently gave me some good leads on possible sources of grants for fundraising that I'd like to discuss. Finally, I've copied in Stephanie the director of the Madison Parks Foundation to help since it seems like our fundraising responsibilities are growing in regards to this project.

I would like to ask again for an on-site meeting with Parks staff. It's been 8 months and 15 days since the playground was removed, and the site still sits largely unchanged, including the large pieces of plastic trash embedded in the

pea gravel leftover from removal. I'd like to ask all Parks staff and the alders if it is acceptable to leave an area without a playground for this long, especially in such bad condition. I have a hard time imagining this would be allowed to happen at other parks like Piper Park or Vilas Park where the planned removal of an equally outdated playground is on indefinite hold for an "archeological survey".

I am a huge fan of Madison Parks in general, our family used to say that if a day went by where we didn't set foot in a Madison Park it was a day wasted. Now, after this playground removal, we find ourselves driving to other parks, including lakeside parks in Monona or parks with nature playgrounds such as CamRock County Park. I'm hoping that we can once again find enjoyment at our local park and playground on the water. We, like many of our neighbors, pay high property taxes on our homes to live in this neighborhood, close to this park which had a playground when we bought our house. We have not used that playground in almost a year since the demolition of Lakeland Ave in the park began last year and we were cut off. Given the recent Parks staff comments surrounding the timeline for this project I have to assume we will go another year without a playground, but I hope that I am wrong.

Thank you all for your time reading this long email. I appreciate the work everyone included has done for Madison Parks in general and for the Olbrich Park Nature Play Area specifically. I hope we can rebuild the trust that has been lost with the community.

Sincerely,

Chas Karch

On Wed, Mar 20, 2024 at 3:27 PM Carrie H <[carriehint@gmail.com](mailto:carriehint@gmail.com)> wrote:

Hi Adam,

I'm responding about your new playground proposal (with feedback due by 3/31) to this thread so all the neighbors can see each other's responses to the plan (I also included the PDF of the plan here for reference, as well as the previous plan we discussed on the recent zoom meeting)!

I appreciate you putting this together and I think it looks good. I am a bit surprised that four features needed to come out (two bench swings, the tree stump circle, and the tree trunk feature) but we didn't see the price list, and I definitely don't know the price of a tree trunk feature;) Anyway, my main question is, we were told we would need to raise about \$10k for the two bay swing set, if we are able to raise \$10k, can we get all four eliminated pieces added (not to impact the implementation timing of this plan, it would be a step two for the near future)?



Thanks so much and I look forward to seeing this playground go in!

Thanks,  
Carrie

On Sat, Mar 16, 2024 at 12:50 AM Sally and Chas <[sckarch830@gmail.com](mailto:sckarch830@gmail.com)> wrote:

Hi Lisa,

Thank you for the update, looking forward to seeing Adams new proposal. We would still like an on-site meeting, I believe it will be helpful for you to see the site as it is currently. That is how it has looked since 7/5/23 and I hope that it can be improved as soon as possible.

Do you have any specific times the week of 4/1 that work for you? Otherwise I can find a time that works for the neighbors.

Best regards,

Chas

On Fri, Mar 15, 2024 at 3:16 PM Laschinger, Lisa <[LLaschinger@cityofmadison.com](mailto:LLaschinger@cityofmadison.com)> wrote:

Good Afternoon Chas,

Thank you for reaching out and for your continued engagement in this process.

I do want to provide you with a project update. I spoke with both Adam and Ann on Tuesday to discuss potential solutions based on the input received at Monday's meeting. Please note, I'm including them along with Alder Martinez-Rutherford. Adam has been working to refine the plan this week and plans to have it available on the

website early next week. Adam is working to propose an option that will swap some of the nature play and porch swings with a swing set, which we believe will balance the requests from the public input we received, provide meaningful nature play opportunities and allow for additional fundraising opportunities. In general, the larger nature area will stay as proposed with a separate swing set area. I think you will be happy with the revised plan.

If you think it is still necessary to meet after you see the plan, we can set something up for the week of April 1. I do know there is a desire to have the area restored as soon as possible, and I think we have a path to do that.

Have a great weekend!

Lisa

Lisa Laschinger

Assistant Parks Superintendent

City of Madison Parks Division

---

**From:** Sally and Chas <[sckarch830@gmail.com](mailto:sckarch830@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, March 15, 2024 1:32 PM

**To:** Laschinger, Lisa <[LLaschinger@cityofmadison.com](mailto:LLaschinger@cityofmadison.com)>

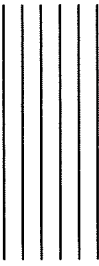
**Cc:** Allison Trapp <[aftrapp@gmail.com](mailto:aftrapp@gmail.com)>; Angie Bobzien <[bobzien.angie@gmail.com](mailto:bobzien.angie@gmail.com)>; Betty Chewning <[betty.chewning@wisc.edu](mailto:betty.chewning@wisc.edu)>; Carrie Hinterthuer <[carriehint@gmail.com](mailto:carriehint@gmail.com)>; Hilary Gerstein <[hisly9@gmail.com](mailto:hisly9@gmail.com)>; Marcus Trapp <[marcustrapp@gmail.com](mailto:marcustrapp@gmail.com)>; Martin Lichtman <[marty.lichtman@gmail.com](mailto:marty.lichtman@gmail.com)>; Sonia Teas <[sjteas@gmail.com](mailto:sjteas@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** Olbrich Nature Play Area Follow-Up

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

Hi Lisa,

I wanted to follow-up with you about a couple of things. First, the on-site meeting with neighbors, would you be able to do that next week? Second, deciding on the changes necessary to include the swingset in the plans. I've included the involved neighbors on this email and we've agreed we can probably work that out with Adam by email in order to save everyone time and keep the project going forward.



Please let me know your thoughts and have a good weekend.

Best,

Chas