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From: Thomas Esch

Sent: Sunday, August 25, 2013 3:37 PM

To: Cornwell, Katherine; Parks, Timothy

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Longfellow School Apartment Project

Hello,

My husband, Tom Esch, and I, Lana Esch, are writing to you to voice our opinion about the apartment project that is being proposed by Randy Alexander, and his company, the Alexander Company, for the Longfellow School site. We are residents of the Greenbush Neighborhood as we live at [REDACTED] Chandler St.

We have attended all of the meetings where Mr. Alexander and his architectural company, Iconica, have presented the various versions of the apartment plans for the Longfellow site. Mr. Alexander has been more than accomodating in making changes to the proposed plan to meet the needs of the Greenbush Neighborhood residents. I have researched some of the other projects that the Alexander Company has completed around the country and I feel that they have done a good job of the other projects that they have completed. I feel that they will do a good job of completing this project, including management of the apartment complex when it is completed.

We do not agree with other residents of the Greenbush Neighborhood who feel that there should be major changes to the parking facilities of the building as changing all of the parking entrances to one side of the building will impact Mound Street and we feel the two parking area entrances will dilute the impact of traffic within the neighborhood to a wider area. We also feel that the other apartment projects, the Ideal and Lanes' Bakery, will not have any impact on the traffic on the these streets. We do feel that residents of the building should not be allowed to receive on street parking permits from the City and we would like to see more bicycle and moped parking for the building.

We would like to see this project begin as soon as possible. We understand that if this proposal is not accepted Meriter Hospital will be boarding up Longfellow School and will not be using the building at all. We feel that an apartment complex in the empty lot and renovation of Longfellow school would be a much better use of the land, particularly since this project will put this land on the tax rolls. Boarding up Longfellow will not do anything but create an eyesore and the implication of a dying neighborhood which we do not want to see happen.

Thank you for providing us the opportunity to voice our opinion about this project.

Sincerely,

Lana Esch
Tom Esch

August 25, 2013

To: City of Madison Plan Commission and Planning Staff

From: Cynthia Williams, Greenbush neighborhood resident (1001 Drake Street)

Subject: Longfellow development zoning change-210 S. Brooks (8/26/13 agenda item #18)

I am writing to express my opposition to the zoning change at 210 S. Brooks Street to accommodate the proposed Longfellow development of 104 rental apartments in the Greenbush neighborhood.

As the staff report points out, the requested zoning change of this property from employment to residential uses represents “a substantial change to the planning for Meriter hospital and its environs.” This zoning change is not in keeping with the Meriter General Development Plan (GDP) approved in 2009, or the Greenbush Neighborhood Plan (2008) and Revitalization Strategy (2010), and I believe that in its present configuration, it is detrimental to the approved long-term goals of the neighborhood.

Meriter Development Plan: When the Meriter General Development plan was created, the neighborhood supported the employment designation of a proposed office building behind Longfellow as part of a medical campus providing a service to the greater community.

- The proposed high density residential development no longer provides a greater community good as part of a hospital, and unlike an office building, the peak times for residents to be in the neighborhood are evening and weekends, exactly the same times as most long-term residents.
- If this land is no longer needed for medical purposes, it seems appropriate to zone it in conformance with the neighborhood plan, which would be low density, or at most medium density development.

Greenbush Neighborhood Plan and Revitalization Strategy: The change of zoning to a high density, 60 unit per acre residential use is not in keeping with the Greenbush Neighborhood Plan and Revitalization Strategy.

- The Greenbush Neighborhood Plan states as one of its major goals increased *home ownership and occupancy* to bring more stability to the neighborhood.
- The Greenbush Revitalization Strategy recommends medium density (25 units per acre) infill development North of Mound Street.
- Non-owner occupied housing in the Greenbush neighborhood is already substantially above the city average, and the city recently approved two high density rental developments within a few blocks of the proposed Longfellow development. An additional proposed high density rental development of 74 units is currently seeking approval only one block away from Longfellow. This would bring a total of 275 new rental apartments into the neighborhood, which would not make owner-occupancy more attractive.
- In approving new high density developments (Ideal and Lanes) a few blocks away, the alder repeatedly stated that this was an appropriate density because it was located on Park Street, in Urban Design District 7 on a major thoroughfare, and not in the traditional residential

neighborhood. The Longfellow proposes even *higher* density, right in the middle of a low density, residential neighborhood with very narrow streets already congested by hospital traffic. There are serious concerns about traffic congestion and parking, expressed by many in the neighborhood.

- The high density and massing of this building, including its large tan masonry block wall, garage door and loading dock which give the appearance of an alleyway facing the neighborhood, are not conducive to helping achieve the goals of increased owner-occupancy the neighborhood has been working to implement and significantly impact the quality of life for nearby neighbors.

I have been a home owner at [REDACTED] Drake Street for over 20 years, and, like many other neighborhood residents, have devoted considerable time and energy providing input to the Meriter GDP, the Greenbush Neighborhood Plan, the Revitalization Strategy, and zoning code to help achieve a vibrant and stable community. I support low to moderate density infill development in keeping with the neighborhood plan. I respectfully ask that the Plan Commission look carefully at this proposed zoning change in light of all of these considerations.

From: Ruth Carpenter [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 26, 2013 4:54 PM
To: Parks, Timothy
Cc: 'Cynthia Williams'
Subject: Longfellow School Development Project: Objections

Mr. Parks and the Planning Commission,

We live on the corner of S. Mills and Drake St. We have lived here for 28 years. We have several concerns about the amount of apartments being constructed, without restraint, in this neighbourhood.

1. **REF LONGFELLOW SCHOOL RPROJECT:** I object to the size and scale of this building project. Again, each project is presented as an "individual" without consideration or the effect the four projects combined have on the density of this neighbourhood.

Again, as with the Ideal building, how is the traffic from the Longfellow building and the 107 S. Mills project flowing from their underground parking onto the street? And, are the parking exits far enough from the sidewalk so pedestrians & bicyclists are clearly visible? These building will feed a huge amount of traffic into the neighbourhood AND on to S. Mills St. I'm sure these apts will be rented to students which will produce more noise and garbage (yes, they litter constantly) that the residents must deal with daily.

MY OPINION: There are going to be TOO MANY apartments and rentals in a very small area if all these buildings are erected. The Planning Commission has been very liberal approving these projects over the objections of the residents Every developer wants to build the biggest and cheapest project so they can make the most profit.

But, that doesn't mean it should be (as it seems to be) rubber stamped with approval by the city (and its many components). Scale it down! And revisit the long range neighbourhood plan. Many neighbours are disgusted with the blatant disregard the city has shown this neighbourhood and the concerns raised, again and again. You will end up driving out the owner occupied residents and then lose a huge tax base to the suburbs. I know you are in favour of all this building but frankly, you don't have to live here.

2. Residential Parking permits: While the city "promised" to limit the number of permits issued to residents of the Ideal apartments, there has been no such commitment exacted from other developers and city. Residential parking permits must be limited in number to ensure residents (I mean permanent ones) have street parking. However,

even with limits, the extra vehicles will spill onto surrounding streets where parking is even more difficult once alternate-side parking begins.

3. With four huge projects looming over single family homes, the prospect of them being filled with students will drive out those single family/owner occupied residents. We own three properties on this block and, if things go poorly with this construction push, may re-evaluate our options. As it is, we pay around \$18,000 per year in taxes. Extra noise and concentration of students should not add to that!
4. (On a side note) I would also like advise you that there have been continuing issues with semi trucks parked up and down the neighbourhood streets during construction idling their engines and spewing exhaust into our windows. Trucks need to stay on the truck routes and not wander through the neighbourhood streets. Please be sure these issues are dealt with BEFORE construction begins on any of these projects.

Thank you for your time.

Ruth and Matt Carpenter
[REDACTED] South Mills St

August 23, 2013

Dear Plan Commission Members and Planning Staff,

I am writing to express my grave concern regarding the proposed development of the Longfellow School and adjacent property on 210 South Brooks Street by Meriter Hospital and the Alexander Company (Item #18 on the Plan Commission agenda for August 26, 2013). My husband and I are homeowners of 1150 Emerald Street, 3 blocks south of the proposed project. Although the proposed project is not in our immediate backyard, it will greatly harm the quality of our Greenbush neighborhood. While I applaud the renovation of the historic Longfellow School, I am strongly opposed to the proposed structure of a 64-unit "big box" apartment complex adjacent to the historic school. The big box design of the proposed structure is completely out of scale for the limited space of the site and goes against current zoning for the site.

Furthermore, while the city Comprehensive Plan indicates that neighborhood plans should guide decisions regarding city planning, the Meriter / Alexander proposal contradicts the Greenbush Neighborhood Plan (approved by the City Council in 2008) in numerous regards. What is the point of the city investing time and money in neighborhood plans if they are only to be ignored in the development process?

My concerns and recommendations for improvement regarding the project include the following:

Appropriateness of the structure for the neighborhood and site:

- This proposal will add a total of 104 new rental units to the block south of Mound St and North of Chandler St. This equates to 61 units per acre, which, according to definitions obtained from the City Comprehensive Plan, would be defined as High Density Residential (41-60 units per acre).
- Such high density housing contradicts the recommendations in the Greenbush Neighborhood Plan to limit density in the area south of Mound Street to 0-15 units per acre. **In other words, the proposal would increase density by 25% over the amount recommended** in the plan.
- The Greenbush Neighborhood worked as a willing partner with Meriter Hospital to develop Meriter's General Development Plan which was approved in 2009. The GDP calls for an additional Meriter office building at this location, which changed the zoning of the site from low density residential to business zoning. Now Alexander is requesting to change the zoning to *high density residential*. City planning staff have stated in their report that high density residential zoning would have less of an impact on neighborhood density than an office building, but their assessment does not take into consideration the fact that **density issues created by an office building would occur at times of day when neighbors are not present. However, a 104-unit apartment project would contribute to congestion, noise and other density issues at times of day (mornings, evenings and weekends) when residents are present.** If the hospital no longer intends to use the site for administrative purposes, shouldn't the parcel revert to the low density residential zoning as specified prior to establishment of the Meriter GDP?
- City staff also state that the proposal is consistent with the Greenbush Neighborhood Plan's objectives of introducing a broader range of housing into the area, but their assessment disregards **two essential themes of the neighborhood plan: promoting owner-occupied housing in order to establish a more stable and vibrant neighborhood; and creating an environment that is pedestrian friendly and allows for human interaction between its residents.** The function and "big-box" design of the new structure do not promote either objective.
 - In terms of owner occupied housing, the apartments will worsen our neighborhood's dearth of such units. According to the neighborhood plan, only 46.7% of Greenbush's units are owner occupied as compared to 68.4% city-wide.

- In terms of creating an interactive and pedestrian friendly environment, the lack of any street-facing entrances or stoops/porches on the new structure does not allow for apartment residents to easily mingle with their other Greenbush neighbors.
- The so-called “tan” masonry block (which, if you look at the material sample, is actually an ugly concrete gray that undermines the integrity of the historic Longfellow school) above the ground level parking will be a 10’ high eyesore and will certainly not be welcoming or interesting for pedestrians.
- In their presentation to neighborhood residents, the developers constantly referred to ways in which they will hide this masonry block. My response is why would anyone ever construct a building which has a façade you want to camouflage? The Greenbush Neighborhood Plan states that new constructions should be of high quality building design with materials and landscaping that are reflective of the historic, architectural features of the neighborhood. **An easy way that the developers could improve upon the design and better integrate it into the neighborhood is to face the masonry block with the same brick materials that are used on the rest of the building. Or better yet, why not use a limestone veneer which would complement the limestone accents of Longfellow School? I recommend that they take cues from the newly constructed Brown Loft Apartments on University Avenue which have avoided a big box feel by incorporating stone and brick rather than sterile concrete masonry into their lower level façade.**
- Furthermore, the landscaping proposed to hide the masonry block does not take into consideration the fact that Wisconsin winters last for five months. In addition to the proposed deciduous trees and clematis-filled trellises, **the landscape design should integrate conifers to provide for greenery during the winter months** when the cold concrete block will certainly feel like an intimidating fortress to neighbors and pedestrians.
- Regarding the design, the city planning department has recommended the following changes to the south side of the new structure: more transparency to be added to the four-story tall stair tower and larger windows for the trash room. **I caution against such changes as more transparency will increase the constant light glaring on residents living on the south side of Chandler.**

Traffic, Parking and Safety Issues Related to Proposed Design:

- The neighborhood plan states that “parking is one of the most important issues in the neighborhood. There is a deficiency of residential, visitor and employee parking in the neighborhood both during the week and on weekends.” As a property owner who must park on the street, I wholeheartedly concur. The current proposal makes the south side of the new structure on Chandler Street into an aesthetic and traffic/parking nightmare. In addition to the 10’ high concrete masonry block barrier, the design incorporates a loading pad and dual garage doors for a parking entrance. Currently, 2-way traffic on narrow Chandler Street is difficult in the summer and impossible in the winter. The street is full at all times with parked cars, making it very difficult to navigate. The addition of delivery, trash and moving trucks accessing the loading pad will worsen the situation.
- The new building’s parking entrance and loading dock will reduce the number of parking spaces on the north side of Chandler Street and will increase parking pressure on neighboring streets. Longfellow project residents and their visitors will compete for limited parking spaces with those who currently live in the neighborhood.
- **Recommendation: Some of the adverse effects on Chandler Street could be alleviated if the loading dock were moved north to the Mound Street side. Moving or adding an additional residential parking exit to Mound Street will also help. As Mound Street dead-**

ends at Meriter Hospital, and is populated by administrative and commercial buildings rather than single and 2- family residences as on Chandler Street, it makes sense to have the additional parking entrance and loading dock moved to this side where hospital valet and apartment dwellers would be the main participants in the traffic flow. It will also prevent Chandler Street from becoming an unsightly back-alley for a very large 104 unit apartment complex.

Global Picture for Planning:

- Sound city planning requires that projects not be reviewed in isolation. The proposal for the Longfellow project should be examined within the larger context of other recent developments in the neighborhood. One block over on S. Mills Street, Gallina Company has planned a 74-unit 4 and ½ story apartment complex. The nearby Lanes and Ideal developments have already been approved for a total of 97 apartment units. If the 104 units proposed for the Longfellow project go through, the neighborhood will have **added 275 rental units within a quarter mile. Given that there are roughly 1200 total units (according to the 2010 neighborhood plan) in the entire Greenbush neighborhood, these projects combined will result in a roughly 25% increase in neighborhood units in 1-2 years time!** Certainly, related issues of noise, traffic congestion, parking, and stresses to city services will follow.
- All four of the above apartment complexes include an overwhelming majority of 1-bedroom units, with only a few two-bedroom units scattered throughout. This type of small apartment unit is aimed at attracting transient 20-somethings, rather than families who are more likely to become long-term, contributing residents of the neighborhood.
- Such rapid growth of rental units in “the Bush” will make our neighborhood less attractive to home buyers, and even to long-term renters, such as families. **The Greenbush Neighborhood Plan emphasizes repeatedly that increased owner occupancy is key to creating a more stable and vibrant central city.**
- The city council agreed to such a philosophy when it approved the neighborhood plan. If the city truly wants to stimulate and support its unique and historic urban neighborhoods, it should trust the residents of these neighborhoods, rather than large, for-profit developers, to guide the direction of their communities. Please respect the efforts of those who contributed to the development process inherent in the Greenbush Neighborhood Plan and the Meriter General Development Plan. Failure to do so will undermine any faith that residents have in the Neighborhood Plan Process. I ask that you review these documents before making your decision.

Respectfully,

Emily Miller
Home owner, [REDACTED] Emerald Street
[REDACTED]