

**From:** Bryant Moroder <[bryant@baumrevision.com](mailto:bryant@baumrevision.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 12, 2024 12:19 PM  
**To:** Kaniewski, Adam B <[AKaniewski@cityofmadison.com](mailto:AKaniewski@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Garver and Olbrich

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

Hi Adam

Hope you are feeling better. Eric mentioned you were under the weather.

At your earliest convenience, can you please submit this attached communication into the Public Comment record re: legistar # 82673 and make sure that is also received by all of the Parks Commissioners.

Thanks

Bryant



MADISON REGION  
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

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March 27, 2024

As President and CEO of Madison Region Economic Partnership (MadREP), I am writing to express support for the economic impact and invaluable contributions made by Garver Feed Mill and Olbrich Botanical Gardens to our region.

Garver and Olbrich collectively draw over 500,000 visitors to our region annually, serving as focal points for recreational, cultural, education and social activities. Beyond the sheer numbers, these destinations are fundamental to our future economic growth. Together, Garver and Olbrich generate millions of dollars in local activity as one of the region's top tourism destinations.

They not only bolster our local economy, evidenced by the 15 local businesses operating at Garver Feed Mill, but also provide employment for over 180 individuals, supporting numerous families in our region.

Garver and Olbrich serve as enablers for the success of numerous small business vendors, artists, musicians, local food entrepreneurs, farmers, and non-profit organizations. By hosting diverse markets and programs, they cultivate an environment conducive to creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. The presence of the Late Winter Dane County Farmers Market, which has a waiting list of vendors, provides consumers with year-round access to locally produced food, keeping food spending dollars in the community and directed towards the small business vendors. Similar programs such as the Midwest Vintage Flea, Femmestival, Fine Arts and Craft Sale and GLEAM provide similar impact.

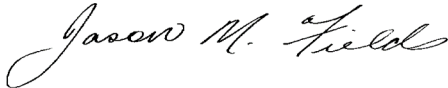
It is essential to recognize that the economic impact of Garver and Olbrich extends beyond monetary considerations. They embody the spirit of our community, enriching the lives of residents and visitors alike with their exceptional offerings. By providing safe, accessible, and well-planned events and activities year-round, they contribute to the fabric of Madison as a special place to live, work, learn, and play.

Moreover, Garver and Olbrich promote inclusivity and affordability, ensuring that everyone in our

community has access to recreational, educational, and cultural experiences. Their commitment to collaboration and programming with a diverse range of community partners underscores their dedication to fostering unity and cohesion within our region.

In conclusion, we urge you to recognize the economic significance of Garver and Olbrich and to support initiatives that promote their continued success. By doing so, we can strengthen our regional economy, enhance our quality of life, and preserve the unique character of our community for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Jason  
Fields  
President  
& CEO  
Madison Region Economic Partnership

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8517 Excelsior Drive, Suite 107, Madison, WI 53717 • 608.571.0420 • madisonregion.org

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**From:** Tyler Huebner <tyler.huebner@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 12, 2024 1:52 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Cc:** Kaniewski, Adam B <AKaniewski@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Olbrich Park - North Parcel Plan

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Dear Board of Park Commissioners,

My name is Tyler Huebner and I live at 2401 Oakridge Avenue in Madison.

I'm writing today to strongly encourage you to put forth a final plan for Olbrich North Park that considers the following:

- Encourages and benefits the public programming and operations at Olbrich Botanical Gardens and Garver Feed Mill
- Provides open space and infrastructure to support and encourage unique collaborative programming for festivals, food trucks, and cultural activities that this site offers.
- Acknowledges and considers the impact on the 15 locally-owned small businesses surrounded by Olbrich Park and located inside the Garver Feed Mill by collaborating with Garver for the final vision of the Olbrich North Park
- Acknowledges and considers the impact to the hundreds of small business vendors, artists, musicians, local food entrepreneurs, farmers, and non-profit organizations that benefit from the community programming, cultural activities, markets and fundraisers held within the Garver Feed Mill and Olbrich Botanical Gardens.

- Provides adequate parking that increases accessibility and addresses a substantial need for the 500,000+ annual visitors to the existing and proposed Olbrich Park, Garver, and Olbrich Botanical Gardens.

The Olbrich and Garver experience represents what makes Madison a special place to live, work, and play. Garver and Olbrich achieve this by delivering an exceptional community space for safe, accessible, well-planned, and consistent year-round events and activities for everyone in Madison. They ensure affordable and inclusive opportunities for recreational, educational, and cultural experiences by bringing people together through celebration of arts, outdoor spaces, historic preservation, the environment, local food, music, and collaboration and programming with a diverse range of community partners.

We appreciate your consideration of this special opportunity that supports Madison's vision to enhance the quality of life for everyone in our community.

Sincerely,

Tyler

Tyler Huebner  
2401 Oakridge Ave  
Madison, WI 53704  
608-575-2201  
[tyler.huebner@gmail.com](mailto:tyler.huebner@gmail.com)

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**From:** Samuel Sveen <sveen52@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 9:39 AM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Garver Feed Mill Park Plans

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

Hi - I'm writing about the Garver Feed Mill Park Plans / Olbrich Park-North Parcel Park Development Plan.

Just wanted to express excitement for the Bike Skills Loop! We have two little kids and we live in the area. We often drive to Aldo Leopold Park, but it would be great to have something similar to the pump track/dirt track nearby that we can ride bikes to.

Thanks!

Sam

--

**Samuel D. Welsch Sveen**

email: [sveen52@gmail.com](mailto:sveen52@gmail.com)  
tele: 605 380 4012

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**From:** Alisa Toninato <alisa@felionstudios.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 2:34 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Cc:** Kaniewski, Adam B <AKaniewski@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Support Letter for Olbrich North Park Plan

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

Hello!

I'm hoping this isn't coming in too late. I want to send my submission in favor of the upcoming decisions to create an engaging public park area just north of Garver Feed Mill.

Attached is my letter of support!

Thank you for all of your considerations!

Kindest Regards,

**Alisa Toninato**

*Owner / Artist*

**FeLion Studios LLC**

6446 Hwy 19

Waunakee, WI 53597

[www.FeLionStudios.com](http://www.FeLionStudios.com)

*Cell: 608.308.1113*



## Support for a Olbrich North Park plan

|  
Dear Alder Dina Nina Martinez-Rutherford, Superintendent Knepp and Mr. Kaniewski

My name is Alisa Toninato and I am writing to you on behalf of FeLion Studios LLC.

For the past 15 years, my studio has organized a large community metal casting event every February, which has enjoyed being hosted at Olbrich Botanical Gardens each year for the past 5 years. During the event, we draw in over 2300 visitors through Olbrich's facility to participate in, learn from, and enjoy watching our spectacular demonstration of this rare artisan form. Aside from inviting locals to our event, this unique experience is celebrated by a regional inventory of artists, students, engineers, businesses reps and industry professionals in the foundry trades from Detroit Michigan to St. Loise Missouri and Chicago Illinois to Minneapolis Minnesota, as well as everywhere in between.

In tandem to the metal casting event at Olbrich, Garver Feed Mill and Garver Events have been critical collaborators as hosts and in-kind donors to the spaces available for the public to gather during our official After Party and gallery space at Canvas, for participants, locals, business leaders and the artisan crew to connect as both professionally and socially before, during and after the iron pour event.

Over the years, we have developed a fond relationship with several of the independent businesses inside of Garver Feed Mill, hosting workshops, creative experiences and benefiting mutually from each other's services in order to amplify the community connection and celebrate all of the commerce and inspiration that the arts brings to Madison, WI.

I'm writing today to strongly encourage you to put forth a final plan for Olbrich North Park that considers the following:

- Encourages and benefits the public programming and operations at Olbrich Botanical Gardens and Garver Feed Mill
- Provides open space and infrastructure to support and encourage more unique and special collaborative programming with community partners and for the community
- Acknowledges and considers the impact on the 15 locally-owned small businesses surrounded by Olbrich Park and located inside the Garver Feed Mill by collaborating with Garver on the final vision for the Olbrich North Park
- Acknowledges and considers the impact to the hundreds of small business vendors, artists, musicians, local food entrepreneurs, farmers, and non-profit organizations that benefit from the community programming, cultural activities, markets and fundraisers held within the Garver Feed Mill and Olbrich Gardens.
- Provides adequate parking that addresses a substantial need for the 500,000+ annual visitors to the existing and proposed Olbrich Park, Garver Feed Mill and Olbrich Botanical Gardens.

The Olbrich and Garver experience represents what makes Madison a special place to live, work and play. Garver and Olbrich achieve this by delivering an exceptional community space for safe, accessible, well-planned, and consistent year-round events and programs for everyone in Madison. They ensure affordable and inclusive opportunities for recreational, educational, and cultural experiences by bringing people together through celebration of arts, outdoor spaces, historic preservation, the environment, local food, music, and collaboration and programming with a diverse range of partners.

Thank you for your consideration of this special opportunity that supports Madison's vision to enhance the quality of life for everyone in our community.

Kindest Regards,  
Alisa Toninato  
Owner / Artist  
FeLion Studios LLC

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**From:** Otehlia Cassidy <otehlia@madisoneatsfoodtours.com>

**Sent:** Friday, April 19, 2024 11:09 PM

**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>

**Subject:** Letter of Support for Olbrich North Park plan

You don't often get email from [otehlia@madisoneatsfoodtours.com](mailto:otehlia@madisoneatsfoodtours.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Dear Madison Parks Commission

My name is Otehlia Cassidy, and I am writing to you on behalf of my small, woman-owned business, Madison Eats Food Tours.

For several years, Garver Feed Mill has generously provided space for my business to offer the Bike N' Bites Food Tours that my company hosts for visitors to our community. The tour is a cultural and historic exploration of the tastes and sights of Madison's east-side neighborhood and several locally-owned small businesses. Madison Eats Food Tours focuses on supporting local farmers, producers, chefs and food lovers through fun and engaging events. We take great pride in showcasing the richness and diversity of our local food community and producers to participants who come from all around the country. Garver and organizations within the Garver Feed Mill have been critical to the success of my business.

I'm reaching out today to encourage that the Parks Commission supports a plan for Olbrich North Park that considers the substantial recreational, educational, economic, and cultural experiences that Garver, Olbrich Botanical Gardens and the surrounding park provide to our

community and my business.

As a person whose job it is to highlight and feature Madison's small business community, I believe that an accessible Olbrich North Park plan is important to consider when finalizing the Plan. Having attended many of the community events at Garver Feed Mill such as the Late Winter Farmers Market and as a visitor to Olbrich Gardens, I can attest that additional parking would provide substantial benefit to the entire Olbrich Park and its users. The parking planned for 65 stalls seems to be insufficient for the current programming that brings the amount of people to the area. A plan for more adequate parking would provide more opportunities for accessible and inclusive participation in the year-round events and programs at Olbrich and Garver for those individuals and families that do not live nearby or have the means to use bike or alternative transportation.

I greatly appreciate your attention to this special opportunity that supports Madison's commitment to support small, locally owned businesses while preserving land and recreational spaces.

Sincerely,

Otehlia Cassidy  
Owner, Madison Eats Food Tours

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## **Otehlia Cassidy**

Owner, Madison Eats Food Tours, LLC & Otehlia Travels, LLC

Culinary Tours & Events--Madison, WI|Mexico|Cuba|Belize

<https://otehliatravels.com/> | <https://madisoneatsfoodtours.com/>

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Sent: Saturday, April 20, 2024 11:11 AM  
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
Subject: Garver Feed Mill

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

Dear Members of the City Parks Commission,

I'm writing to urge you to support a new park and additional parking for Garver Feed Mill. Garver and Olbrich are such treasures to the greater Madison community and have been so for our family for the past 30 years.

After starting our family, my partner Nate and I moved back home to Madison. Our daughter loved to explore on the grounds of both Olbrich and Garver and would usually do so on the same visit. Nate is a photographer and Garver, then and now, is a photographer's delight. In ruins, it made for the most magical space. We'd hunt around while singing songs, looking for treasures and even took a picnic out there a couple of times. While we loved Garver in that state of hanging on with its strong bones and overgrown with vegetation, we all hoped that, some day, someone would restore it to its state of glory and that we and the rest of the Madison community would have access to it.

The next time we visited Garver it was filled with such life. The delightful, small local businesses had attracted people from across the city and beyond to eat, shop, play and hear music, drink coffee shop and just hang out. Since then, we've attended every Midwest Flea Market, multiple concerts and a wedding. We get massages a few times a year at the beloved Kosa and not only do we love Ians Pizza, one of their owners

is a farmer and he provides our little farm with straw in the fall. It's such a cool community of people over there. Our daughter has had photos taken at Garver for two different dances. At the first photo session, my mothers' heirloom bracelet had fallen off my daughter's wrist outside of Garver. It wasn't expensive but a connection to an elder who is now gone. I reached out to Garver staff who helped us find it. What could have been a really sad event for our daughter was a bright and hopeful one of community and care. That is Garver: a built-to-last hub for community, celebration and care.

For half of the events we've attended at Garver, our family has had to park on neighboring streets, I imagine that many other visitors had to as well and that couldn't have made the neighboring residents happy. It is my understanding that Madison Parks has the chance to add additionally parking along with a new park in the area. We love this idea and we know several families in the area who feel the same way. Garver houses employment for so many workers and it is a safe and friendly place for families and friends to hang out. Olbrich is an equally phenomenal community asset. With your support, I urge you to do everything you can to uplift the wonderful organizations and the community activities that benefit from Garver and Olbrich.

Sincerely,  
Amelia Royko Maurer

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**From:** Jamie Bugel <jamie.bugel@dcmf.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 24, 2024 2:07 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Cc:** Information <info@dcmf.org>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Olbrich Park - North Parcel Park Development Plan

You don't often get email from [jamie.bugel@dcmf.org](mailto:jamie.bugel@dcmf.org). [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Hello Park Commissioners,

Please find the attached letter of support for plans to include a parking area in the Olbrich North Parcel Development. Thank you for your time!

Jamie

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

**From:** Jamie Bugel <jamie.bugel@dcmf.org>  
**Date:** Mon, Mar 25, 2024 at 2:00 PM  
**Subject:** Olbrich Park - North Parcel Park Development Plan  
**To:** <AKaniewski@cityofmadison.com>, <eknepp@cityofmadison.com>, <district15@cityofmadison.com>  
**Cc:** Information <info@dcmf.org>, DCFM Board <dcmf-board@dcmf.org>

Dear Alder Dina Nina Martinez-Rutherford, Superintendent Knepp and Mr. Kaniewski,

Please find the attached letter of support for plans to include a parking area in the North Parcel Development. Thank you for your time!

Jamie

-

**Jamie Bugel**

Market Manager

[Dane County Farmers' Market](#)

[info@dcfm.org](mailto:info@dcfm.org) | (608) 455-1999

*The DCFM offices are open Tuesday through Friday. If you need to reach us during a Saturday market day, please call (608) 455-1999.*

**Jamie Bugel**

Market Manager

[Dane County Farmers' Market](#)

[info@dcfm.org](mailto:info@dcfm.org) | (608) 455-1999

*The DCFM offices are open Tuesday through Friday. If you need to reach us during a Saturday market day, please call (608) 455-1999.*



PO Box 1485 Madison, WI 53701 p 608 455 1999 [dcfm.org](http://dcfm.org)

March 25, 2024

Dear Alder Dina Nina Martinez-Rutherford, Superintendent Knepp and Mr. Kaniewski,

The Dane County Farmers Market (DCFM) is the largest producer-only farmers' market in the country. Since 1972, the DCFM has been a cornerstone of the Madison local food economy, driving the farm-to-table movement in restaurants and households, enhancing tourism and has become the fabric between hundreds of farmers and thousands of consumers.

Since 2020, the DCFM has held our Late Winter Market at Garver Feed Mill from January through April. Every week, families and community members come together and demonstrate their support for locally produced food and small businesses by visiting the Late Winter Market.

Since moving to this new location, we have doubled the number of farmers' selling at this market. And we're happy to report that our customer numbers have steadily risen since we returned post-pandemic in 2022. We see up to 3,500 visitors per market! Our 40 vendors at the Late Winter Market provide access to locally produced food and in turn consumers are



able to keep their food spending dollars in the community and direct towards our small business vendors. Many visitors to the Late Winter Market also enjoy the amenities of Olbrich Park and Olbrich Botanical Gardens.

The experiences offered by Olbrich Park, Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Garver Feed Mill and their partners represent a community-centered place that delivers an exceptional space for our market. For the Late Winter Market, more accessibility to the site promotes food security and creates significant economic benefits.

I am writing today on behalf of the DCFM to strongly encourage you to put forth and adopt a final plan for Olbrich North Park that provides adequate parking that addresses a substantial need for visitors to the Late Winter Farmers' Market. The only complaint we receive from customers is that parking is not sufficient for those who do not live in the neighborhood. An investment in an adequate public parking lot for the entire Olbrich Park at the proposed site benefits all the users and uses within the Olbrich area and creates even more opportunities for community-center programming.

Sincerely,

Jamie Bugel  
Market Manager  
Dane County Farmers Market

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**From:** Chris Pekar <pekar74@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 28, 2024 6:48 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Garver Parking

You don't often get email from [pekar74@gmail.com](mailto:pekar74@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Madison Parks Commissioners,

The recently hosted Earth Day event at the Garver Feed Mill provided insights into the parking situation at Olbrich Park. The turnout was moderate, whereas some events such as the Dane County Farmers Market or GLEAM bring in many more people. And while it may be a surprise for an Earth Day gathering, most attendees opted to drive to the event.

As demonstrated clearly, access to public spaces and community destinations should meet the needs of the wider community, which clearly depends on using cars. I thought it would be appropriate to share this information with you as you consider the next steps in determining the future of the Olbrich North Park.

Thanks, Chris



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**From:** Nicholas Davies <nbdavies@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 30, 2024 9:33 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Cc:** Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina <district15@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Potential corruption in Olbrich North planning process

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

Dear Park Commissioners,

Through an open records request, I've discovered that Bryant Moroder, the owner of Garver Feed Mill, had exclusive access and influence into the planning for Olbrich North, for 3-4 months prior to the general public. When we were shown two options in November, and given an opportunity to comment on them, we were forced to choose between Bryant Moroder's option 1 and Bryant Moroder's option 2.

## Timeline

July 11

Bryant Moroder leverages miscellaneous other gripes with the city (noise, fencing, alleged damage to a curb), to get an in-person meeting with superintendent Eric Knepp. Knepp anticipates that Moroder is going to request more parking, and expresses openness to that. It's unclear from the records obtained whether that refers to the type of temporary parking there today, or an eventual paved lot.

August 23

Knepp indicates that there are no plans ready for Olbrich North, and no public engagement yet--other than discussions with Bryant Moroder.

September 12

At this point, there is a list of planned elements for Olbrich North, including a parking lot of 60-90 stalls, and Knepp is planning to present this to Garver tenants.

November 2

On the day that plans are first made public, Bryant Moroder leaves voicemails for Knepp and Adam Kaniewski. From Knepp's emailed response, it sounds like Moroder expected to have another opportunity to suggest changes before the public sees anything. Knepp apologizes for not giving him that opportunity. It's not clear what changes Bryant was requesting, but those may have indeed been made.

## Context

Meanwhile, there were no records indicating that any similar privilege was extended to the other adjacent property, Garver Point (managed by McGrath) which also has commercial and residential tenants. While Tanya Zastrow may have had some early access to the plans, it looks like most people at Olbrich Gardens first saw the plans and got the survey on Nov 2.

It wasn't an open door policy prior to Nov 2 either. A journalist working on a story for the Isthmus asked about plans for Olbrich North on Aug 22, and got the brush-off on Aug 23.

But then by the time the public was involved, it was already too late to make substantial changes. A mountain biking advocate reached out on Nov 3 about a possible option 3; the department didn't get him a substantive answer until Dec 5, and then the answer was basically "you can attend the PIM on Dec 7". So while Bryant Moroder gets his every whim answered same-day, other community members are given a non-answer over a month later.

When I spoke at your last meeting, my main concern was how Parks is effectively usurping zoning authority, deciding based on vibes alone that Madison's ordinances about how much parking a business should have are incorrect.

That got me wondering how Parks started from such a controversial premise in the first place. I now know more of *how* that happened, but I still don't know *why* Bryant Moroder was given months of exclusive access and influence into the planning of this park, and direct access to Parks superintendent Eric Knepp in particular.

A lot of this happened offline, and thus wasn't part of the records I received. But certainly by granting massive favors to this one business owner, the Parks department is being quite cavalier with the impression of impropriety. Knepp's approach is in stark contrast to Engineering; when Moroder complained to them, they merely gave him info on how to file a claim against the city.

At this point, my primary concern is that this process has been ethically tainted from the start. Thousands of Madison residents filled out the survey in November, but in hindsight, it really looks like those thousands of us were just rubber-stamping decisions already made behind closed doors months prior. We were stuck with arguing over *which* massive amount of parking to build for Bryant Moroder.

The only way to salvage the process at this point would be to start over from scratch, and engage the community *as a whole*, not just select fat cats. Before critical decisions are made, not months after. That's what I'll be urging you to do at your next meeting.

Thank you,

Nick Davies

3717 Richard St

PS. I've uploaded the open records

here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eheKJszVsyo9eIVcTdms6VEZpTINm2C9/view?usp=sharing>

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**From:** Bryant Moroder <bryant@baumrevision.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 2, 2024 11:40 AM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Garver and Olbrich

Hi Nicole,

Thanks for the clarification and update.

Attached is a communication on behalf of Garver we'd like to be included in the update and sent to the Parks Commissioners.

Best,  
Bryant

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On Fri, Apr 26, 2024 at 12:49 PM Park Commission <[pacommission@cityofmadison.com](mailto:pacommission@cityofmadison.com)> wrote:

Dear Bryant,

This item will but up for approval at the May 8<sup>th</sup> Park Commission meeting. I'm attaching any items received after the April meeting the new file 83145 so the commissioners will more easily determine which comments they have not yet seen. The file isn't ready yet, the agenda will be published by Friday of next week (5/3/24)

**NICOLE MILLER** (*she/her*)  
MADISON PARKS  
Administrative Clerk  
(608) 266-4711

After hours Park Ranger:  
(608) 235- 0448



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**From:** Bryant Moroder <[bryant@baumrevision.com](mailto:bryant@baumrevision.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 12, 2024 12:19 PM  
**To:** Kaniewski, Adam B <[AKaniewski@cityofmadison.com](mailto:AKaniewski@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Garver and Olbrich

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Hi Adam

Hope you are feeling better. Eric mentioned you were under the weather.

At your earliest convenience, can you please submit this attached communication into the Public Comment record re: legistar # 82673 and make sure that is also received by all of the Parks Commissioners.

Thanks

Bryant

Bryant Moroder  
Baum Revision  
e: [bryant@baumrevision.com](mailto:bryant@baumrevision.com)  
p: 608.577.1150

[www.garverfeedmill.com](http://www.garverfeedmill.com)  
[www.baumrevision.com](http://www.baumrevision.com)

# GARVER | FEED MILL

*Madison, Wisconsin*

Dear Madison Parks Commissioners,

Since opening in 2019, Garver has become a Madison focal point of recreational, cultural, economic, and social activity as well as a collaborative partner with Olbrich Botanical Gardens. Once a crumbling landmark, with dangerous conditions and a significant liability to the City, Parks and Olbrich, has now become an intersectional place that thrives due to our diversity of public programming and community-centered approach.

Led by the efforts of Garver Events, Garver is a welcoming community space for individuals that might not otherwise have traditional opportunities to connect with others. By offering a space committed to putting community first, Garver Events has created a unique platform for local non-profit organizations, small businesses entrepreneurs and artists to diversify both their audiences and networks. Regular public programming such as the Late Winter Farmers Market, Femmfestival, Eastside Winter Market and Craftacular provide a critical platform for hundreds of diverse entrepreneurs to build community wealth and resiliency.

We invite and strongly encourage you to take 5 minutes to enjoy this video (<https://youtu.be/WPcuPoiGmEw>) to learn about the story of Garver's impact directly from the partners, artists, farmers, small businesses and others that have benefited from the Garver platform.

Garver Events has also been a leader in offering large-scale community events that provide underrepresented voices and community partners with an opportunity to showcase their work and tell their story by combining visual, edible, and audible arts into programming. Since its inception, Garver Events has provided hundreds of thousands of dollars in discounted and subsidized space to hundreds of community organizations, non-profits, artists, and musicians. Some examples of community programs include:

- Femmfestival, an annual festival designed to uplift womxn, femmes, and nonbinary entrepreneurs, artists, and producers. The festival is dedicated to creating a space that cultivates economic inclusivity, equity, and proliferation by reimagining what a festival can be when womxn and allies put themselves, their economic health, and their creative energies first. The fee-free event for femme-identifying creatives and their allies has raised tens of thousands of dollars for local non-profits and its unique economic plan made it more accessible to vendors who would otherwise be unable to participate.
- Remembrance & Celebration, a community sharing of altars made by community members and artists from around the world in collaboration with Latin American, Caribbean & Iberian Studies Program at UW-Madison.
- Winter is Alive! Festival, an environmental educational experience featuring a short film about the impacts of road salt and aerial dancers performing as phosphorus and chloride

molecules with a narrative educational component that played throughout the attention-grabbing spectacle in partnership with Wisconsin Salt Wise.

- Outside Looking In, a transformation at the beginning of the Covid pandemic of Garver's windows into large-scale artworks and text panels viewed by going around the exterior of the building. The near museum experience proved both a creative outlet for artists and a form of entertainment for the public in the most uncertain of times.
- Cheers Madison!, a community choir with a goal of gathering people with common interests, sing quality choral music and build friends in the process and ending with a free community concert each season.
- Local Entrepreneur Showcase, a local food event featuring entrepreneurs of color from the Madison area and food system partners in partnership with REAP Food Group.
- Dane County Health, an exhibit to represent the Community Health Improvement Plan and show their connections to health in collaboration with Madison and Dane County Public Health and Developing Artists, Murals, & Alliances.

In total, 15 organizations including Garver Events call Garver home and employ over 180 individuals. Each of these local organizations has demonstrated their generosity through their track record of giving back to the Madison community. For example, Ian's Pizza has partnered with over 1,600 different community groups and given out over \$120,000 worth of pizza, free slice cards, and donation night funds. Sitka Seafood Market has donated about \$1M, including to many local organizations. Others at Garver have given back by participating in programs such as 1% for the Planet (Nessalla) and providing sanctuary spa experiences for people living with cancer (Kosa).

Many of the food businesses also go above and beyond in sourcing goods from local farms and producers. In addition, last year we welcomed into the building, REAP Food Group, a non-profit organization that for 25 years has worked in Madison to address food security and develop local food systems.

To date, the collaboration with the adjacent Olbrich Botanical Gardens has provided a mutually beneficial partnership that has created a unique sense of community and place that is welcoming to all people in our community as well as out-of-town visitors. Together, Garver Feed Mill and Olbrich Botanical Gardens represent an inclusive experience that provides unreplicable and year-round access to nature, open space, locally-produced food, historic preservation, wellness activities, a celebration of local arts and entrepreneurs, entertainment, and so much more. In fact, Garver Events and Olbrich Gardens were recently awarded the Rising Star and Visionary Awards respectively by Destination Madison in recognition of their impact on the Madison community.

In regards to the proposed Olbrich Park North Parcel Plan, we appreciate your consideration of our perspective, given the unique situation of being located in the center of a 115 acre Community park.

First, we appreciate Parks Department staff efforts to consider a variety of ideas from the community and input by those affected directly by the Plan. Parks staff has given us the opportunity to bring attention to issues that would occur upon implementation of the current Park plan. One of the more significant concerns shared is the absence of provisions for a public restroom facility.

The lack of a public restroom could lead to several issues that would negatively affect both organizations at Garver and the overall community. Primarily, without access to a public bathroom, park users will almost certainly come to Garver for their restroom needs. Without contributing to the cost of maintaining, cleaning, and utilities servicing the bathrooms within the building, Garver's small businesses will be responsible for these increased expenses. Use of the Garver bathroom facilities by park users would increase costs of doing business at a precarious time when we are still recovering from the effects of the COVID pandemic.

Based on past plans, present conditions and future growth, an inadequate approach to limit parking at Olbrich Park will further reduce accessibility to the area, putting further strain on individuals and families that do not have the ability to use alternative transportation, especially during colder weather. Access can also pave the way for additional investment in a Community Park that serves more than just the adjacent neighborhoods.

In 2000, the Olbrich Gardens Master Plan adopted by the Parks Commission incorporated the Garver Building and the Proposed Olbrich North Parcel into the Park. The adopted plan recommends 426 parking stalls to be built in the area "north of the railroad tracks." to adequately meet the Community parks needs. As stated in the document, these plans were adopted consistent with the 1) city Park Plans and Dane County Regional Planning for larger regional eastside greenspace corridors, 2) two decades of water quality improvement for Starkweather Creek 3) city designation of Garver as a historic landmark building 4) Parks Plan for

long-standing designation of Olbrich as a Community Park to serve the entire city as well as the adjacent neighborhoods 5) city and private investment as a regional facility serving both citywide and beyond. **If a similar density of activity has been achieved to what was envisioned by the Parks Commission in 2000, then why would the proposed number of parking spaces when added to existing parking be reduced to only 44% of what was originally approved and planned for the same area?**

Garver and Olbrich have become top destinations for families and seniors, as well as out-of-town visitors. Over ½ million visitors come to the area annually and attendance has grown steadily year-over-year. With other Olbrich Park areas such as the Olbrich Biergarten, Olbrich boat launch, as well as the recreational uses such as softball, volleyball, tennis and soccer, the annual visitor to this area likely swells to over 600,000 annually. With the addition of 15 acres of Olbrich North Parcel Park, the least appropriate parking total would include a minimum of 93 additional parking stalls to stay consistent with current ratio of parking to park space which is 6.2 stalls per acre within Olbrich Park. However, given that this area is much more densely utilized than any other area of the Olbrich Park, we suggest the Parks Commission take special consideration to maintain equitable access to the epicenter of Olbrich Park. As we've heard from many of our community partners, a Plan that lowers the parking ratio would reduce accessibility, negatively



impact the public social and recreational experiences when visiting the Olbrich Park area and impede opportunities to build community wealth and resiliency.

Of all the areas within Olbrich Parks considered for any future parking, this would by far be the most appropriate location. Because this area currently does not have an active park use and was historically an industrial site, it would not create a circumstance where the Commission would need to remove a park amenity from any other section of Olbrich Park to accommodate for future parking needs. Furthermore, the very loud and dusty rock-crushing that occurred just a few hundred feet from the Garver building from March 2023 - October 2023, though extremely disruptive to the operations of Garver’s businesses and resulting in damage to the Garver property, did create an excellent area for a future parking lot. A parking lot at this location would result in considerable savings due to the compaction of soils and on-site gravel readily available.

Parks staff has also indicated that future plans for reconstruction of the other lots within Olbrich Park will result in an overall reduction of parking stalls in Olbrich Park and further reduce accommodations to those that don’t live nearby or do not have access to alternative transportation.

Despite the call to limit parking as an effective strategy to get people to change their transportation modes, we would reference this photo recently shared with us by an astute neighborhood resident. At the recent free community Earth Day Celebration at Garver, when given the option, even Madison most committed environmentalists chose to drive to the site due to the popularity of the location as a place for community gathering. Unfortunately, the nearest bus service stops were eliminated as service has been prioritized to more densely populated corridors.



Looking ahead, we believe that the Olbrich Park North Parcel can meet Parks and neighborhoods goals and serve as a Community park that supports community programming that further represents the diversity of people served by Garver, Olbrich, Parks and other partners.

Because of the existence of Garver Feed Mill and Olbrich Botanical Gardens at the heart of Olbrich Park, this Plan represents an unique opportunity to have a positive impact for outdoor

enthusiasts, cultural interactions, arts and music, historic preservation, local small businesses and nature and the environment.

We are encouraged by opportunities in the current Olbrich Park plan that represents open space, picnic areas, parking, a play area, maintaining the existing wood area and walking paths that create the potential for more community-centered programming. Specifically, we are hopeful that in collaboration with the Madison Park Department and Olbrich Gardens that will lead to more opportunities to create even more inclusivity through expanded platforms for community events, music, food-centered experiences, entrepreneurs, artistic endeavors, and wellness activities throughout the entire year.

We again appreciate your concerns about the Plan's impact on those most invested in the future of Olbrich Park.

Sincerely,

Garver Feed Mill

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