

Cleveland, Julie

From: Evers, Tag
Sent: Friday, October 27, 2023 1:12 PM
To: Ledell Zellers; nicole.solheim@gmail.com; Duncan, John; Field, Derek; Figueroa Cole, Yannette; mcsheppard@madisoncollege.edu; klanespencer@gmail.com; sundevils98@yahoo.com; pwheck@gmail.com
Cc: Plan Commission Comments; Stouder, Heather; Tao, Yang; Bannon, Katherine J; Steve Doran
Subject: Re: Addendum - Re: 1609 S. Park St (Legistar 78428)

Dear Plan Commission Members,

RE: 1609 S Park Street; District 13: Consideration of a conditional use in the Commercial Corridor-Transitional (CC-T) District for a vehicle access sales and service window to allow a restaurant to be converted into a coffee shop with vehicle access sales and service window in Urban Design Dist. 7

I'm writing to inform you that I've backed off my opposition to this project.

My primary opposition when I spoke to you on August 28 was to the drive-thru only aspect of the original proposal. The proposal is now for a full-service cafe, which is more in keeping with the expectations of the neighborhood. Some will still object to Starbucks on the grounds that such a business signals gentrification and, secondly, that questionable labor practices itself constitutes disqualification. However, it's my understanding these concerns are extraneous to the merits of the application before you.

Since we met last, I've come to a better understanding of the Zoning Administrator's interpretation of the TOD Overlay District Ordinance, namely, that the reuse of an existing structure <50% expansion does not trigger the more exacting requirements of our new ordinance. In other words, auto-oriented uses for projects not involving new construction and projects under the 50% threshold are expressly given more latitude. Consequently, it's not evident granting a new CUP for the existing drive-thru window and drive-thru lane would run afoul of our recently-adopted Overlay District ordinance.

One could argue this is a grey area, but if that is so, I assume the appropriate recourse would be to take the matter to the Zoning Board of Appeals, which appears to be the proper venue for challenging an interpretation by Zoning.

Concerns regarding pedestrian safety have been addressed, as mentioned in the Addendum to Staff Comments. My own conversations with Traffic Engineering staff have answered my concerns and I now understand why the proposed queuing map is optimal for this site.

Planning staff have assured me they have no qualms about possible future development of the adjacent parcels given the required easements. That said, one can speculate that the three parcels could be effectively combined for a significant housing project at some point in the future and that a successful Starbucks cafe could be an obstacle. I understand, however, such speculation may not be within your purview.

While it may seem odd that I would go from ardent opposition to qualified acceptance of this proposal, I do so in recognition of the change from a drive-thru only business to a full service cafe. This is an important compromise and a positive step forward. While this project may not be my first choice for this site, I no longer oppose it.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tag

Tag Evers

DISTRICT 13 ALDER
CITY OF MADISON
(608) 424-2580

district13@cityofmadison.com

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