

**From:** Matt Gawlik <mattbgawlik@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 8, 2024 6:26 AM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Olbrich Park Plans - Too much parking

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

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Dear Parks Commission,

I'd like to express my opposition to the amount of parking in the plans for the Olbrich Park North Parcel. I'm also quite concerned by the amount of influence a nearby business owner had in the plans prior to the public process.

When people say that there isn't enough parking, what they usually mean is that there isn't always free parking immediately available in front of their destination. The [Olbrich Botanical Gardens website](#) shows that there are 675 parking spots in the neighborhood. While there may be a few days each year where people who drive need to park farther away and walk, or wait 5-10 minutes for a parking spot, this amount of parking is more than sufficient the vast majority of the time. On days with high demand, that demand can be managed by charging for event parking, much like is done around Breese Stevens or the Kohl Center during games.

It was eye opening to read the emails in legistar obtained via an open records request. Is it part of the normal parks process to allow a business owner to design the parking lot of a new park simply because they own a business in the area? I hope not. I certainly don't want the limited parks department budget to be spent constructing a parking lot for Mr. Moroder.

I am also concerned by the way Ann Freiwald discussed the concerns of a resident asking to discuss adding bike amenities to the park, stating "I have to scratch my head at the entitlements some folks seem to think they possess." Residents are entitled to politely provide feedback on park plans, and they are even entitled to request a meeting to discuss concerns. It's understandable that you don't have time to meet with everyone who wants to, but it's clear that we are only entitled to actually get these meetings if we are wealthy business owners.

Matt Gawlik

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**From:** Chas Karch <chas.c.karch@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 8, 2024 11:36 AM  
**To:** Joe S <joe.d.schubert@gmail.com>; Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Garver North Plat Project

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Dear Board of Parks Commissioners,

I wanted to give my comment on the Olbrich Park North Parcel Park Development Plan (Agenda item 16). I oppose the parking lot included in the plan. I want to echo the excellent points made by Joe

Schubert about why the parking lot should be reconsidered in the submission he made. I agree with everything he points out.

I also want to address a claim made by the Superintendent in a recent SASY neighborhood association meeting that the parking lots in Olbrich park are at capacity 40 weekends a year. I find that to be a factually false and completely ridiculous statement. Olbrich park has 6 parking lots with a huge number of spaces. I walk through the park by each one nearly every day with my dog. I have never seen all of them full, much less 40 out of 52 weekends a year. The parking lots at Garver and Olbrich Gardens are full occasionally, but there is already ample overflow parking at both boat launches which are an easy walk to Garver and the Gardens. Those parking lots I have never seen full at the same time as the Garver and Gardens lots.

I suggest that a parking study be conducted before any new parking lots are constructed. There was just a new one built on the old Lakeland Ave extension across from the gardens.

Sincerely,  
Chas Karch

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**From:** Betty Chewning <betty.chewning@wisc.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 8, 2024 12:36 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Comment on the proposed North Plat Plan

You don't often get email from [betty.chewning@wisc.edu](mailto:betty.chewning@wisc.edu). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Commissioners - I'm hoping that you will consider reading my attached comments since I'm unable to join the meeting tonight. I am frantically grading final exams.

Thank you for your service as always.

Be well.

Betty Chewning  
Former Member, Chair  
Madison Park Commission

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Comments to the Parks Commission  
Date: 5/8/24  
From: Betty Chewning

Dear Parks Commissioners:

Many of us in the SASY Neighborhood have long tramped the Garver North Plat and appreciated the unique natural space and its ongoing potential as the best east side quiet space to appreciate the night sky. This is a rare in the City of Madison to have both the creek and quiet space. I strongly urge you not to add a "children's natural park", a bike course, a parking lot. For some reason, the potential for this unique wetland space is undervalued by the Parks Department.

Honestly, it has always been a city dumping ground. Now toxic areas will need to be capped. This is when we could also work to revitalize rather than diminish it's potential as a wetlands. Birds and pollinators need their habitats just as we need ways to experience our quiet night sky. Please make this area a model to admire.

It is ironic that you would add a parking lot and a "natural playground" in this space that should be cherished as a much larger natural walking habitat. Adding a "natural park" here is unsettling especially given how the Parks Department unannounced took out our Olbrich Park playground equipment next to Lake Monona at least in part for budgetary reasons we were told. Instead, a "natural playground" could be substituted. How much will a natural playground in the North Plat cost? \$50,000?

Encouraging bikes into natural green spaces was the source of great anger on the West side recently. We feel the same here about the North Plat. Inviting bikes into the North Plat means they will go everywhere including next to the creek. It is naïve to think otherwise. I have watched them go across the effigy mounds in front of my house. Some ardent bikers don't care about boundaries; what they welcome is a challenge.

Over the years I've participated in a number of planning sessions in our neighborhood for Garver and the North Plat. We fought for the green plan for the Garver building and we won. That vision did not come from the City staff. It did not come from Parks. It came from Alder Marsha Rummel, and then in a partnership with SASYNA we helped the city see this vision as viable. It was a lot of work. We never planned more parking than what is there now. Adding the picnic area, playground, bike course simply adds to the burden on parking. Why would you do that? It seems the parks department is turning toward an isolated patchwork "recreational approach" of planning for specific user groups, rather than appreciating what it has in the undeveloped space.

Madison's undeveloped green space is dwindling and some is toxic like ours. Aldo Leopold pointed out that because a space looks empty on a map does not mean it isn't used. Far from it. The protection, improvement and preservation of large green space holds the promise of education, enjoyment, and preservation. I know having been a Parks Commissioner and even Chair that these decisions are difficult. Although you may not feel like it, I want to reinforce that you all make a huge difference as you think about needs of those in the present and future.

Thanks for your service and for reading this far.

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