

September 19, 2011

To: City of Madison Plan Commission

Re: Agenda Item 15, Proposed Lenhart Development: University Crossing, corner of University Avenue and Whitney Way

From: Richard J. Pearson, Member of Spring Harbor Neighborhood Association  
5030 Lake Mendota Drive  
Madison, WI 53705

The Spring Harbor Neighborhood Association (SHNA) has provided a position paper on this development, which is generally in favor of the development. I am a party to this position paper.

However, it is important for the Plan Commission to understand that SHNA's approval is **NOT** blanket approval. It is contingent upon several storm water management actions which are not in Lenhart's budget. These will not be accomplished without being clearly established as Conditions of the Development.

The Plan Commission may be interested to know that more stringent storm water management actions were recently included in a project by Lenhart when so required by Shorewood. Therefore, a precedent has been clearly set.

I am a fourth generation member of my family to occupy lakeshore property at the same location, dating back to 1853.

Included in my packet is a letter my father wrote to the newspaper in 1953, bemoaning siltation of the creek feeding Spring Harbor, caused by development. The buildings which are about to be demolished were just being constructed at that time, and have contributed to environmental damage up to the present time. Approval is about to be granted for another set of buildings with a probable life of another 50 years.

I sincerely believe that this development represents a great opportunity to exceed minimum standards, at minimum cost for the greater good. I believe that none of us would like to look back at this moment a few years from now with regret. The added cost of our requested storm water management is not a deal breaker.

Also included in my packet is an aerial photograph after a rainstorm which brings this entire subject into sharper perspective. We all want the increased tax base, but it does not need to be at the expense of our lake, our well, and our children.

Thank you for your consideration.



Dick Pearson



The Ralph Pearson is this article was my father, who became very concerned about erosion and silt about 40-50 years before Bill Fitzpatrick and others took up the cause.

One can only imagine a sandy lake bottom!

When he wrote this, well it had not yet been installed, to ultimately dry up the rest of the springs.

The year of this article is about 1950-53. It can be deduced from the ad below.

*Ralph Pearson*

Dane County 40 et 8

## BASEBALL EXCURSION

Special Milwaukee Road Train

Friday Eve. July 23

Milwaukee Braves

Vs.

New York Giants

Round trip ticket including grandstand seat \$6

Leaves Madison 5:30 p.m., Sun Prairie 5:45 p.m. Arrives Milwaukee 7:30 p.m. Leaves 20 minutes after game.

### Tickets on Sale

Sun Prairie—McGovern's Tavern, Brown Derby, Chases, Middleton—Atkins' Jewelry, Madison—Vic & Vi's, Atwood Ave.; Corcoran's Tavern; The Hub, McFarland—Nelson Hardware, McFarland Tavern; Edwards Park Store. Also at Milwaukee R.R. Station.



I RECEIVED a fine letter from an old 5th ward friend of mine expressing his opinion about the condition of Lake Mendota. Ralph Pearson, whose grandparents purchased the property where he now lives in 1853, has noticed the great change that has taken place from the excessive silt deposits due to the watershed run off in the Merrill Springs area where his property is located and where he has lived for over fifty years. Here is what Ralph has to say about the region around the springs. He writes:



Goodlad

"My grandparents purchased in 1853 the property where I now live on Mendota Drive. Also included in this purchase was the land now known as Indian Hills, Blackhawk Park, Merrill Springs and the Spring Harbor area.

"Up until about 1907 my family operated a dairy farm on this area. The farm was sold at this time and continued to operate as a dairy farm.

"I remember very well as a boy, the creek that now feeds Spring Harbor. It was much larger in the old days and was entirely fed by clear, sparkling waters. I say spring waters because there were many springs that flowed into this creek in those days.

"Some of these springs started up near the railroad tracks, others had their sources in Blackhawk Park while the largest ones poured forth their pure waters from underneath what is now the Middleton road.

"All members of my family were ardent fishermen and utilized most of their spare moments from farming in trying to catch a good mess in the lake and also in stocking trout in the springs. My father and another old pioneer planted brook trout in the springs. This old pioneer was Wm. Pethrick, a former employe of the State Journal. Trout were always plentiful and offered a change of diet from the game fish that also were always plentiful in the lake.

"Trout could be caught up in the creek until the Middleton road was changed. This road change coupled with poor farming methods soon ruined the creek. The dredging of Spring Harbor spelled the ruin of the creek.

"Tons of silt were permitted to enter the creek and thence into Mendota because of the excavating along the highway. This silting has continued over the past decades with ever-increasing severity.

"The recent housing projects in Mohawk and Blackhawk parks have contributed immensely to the silt deposits that are slowly taking over the beach area. Our city and county fathers have been very careless in permitting these developments to carry on without any heed to the problem of soil erosion.

"Years ago there used to be a space of about a city block from the shore line to the edge of the weed beds. This made for a fine, hard sandy beach. The present status of this same beach is one that has deep deposits of mud which has stimulated the growth of weeds clear up the shore line.

"This silting process continues to function wherever there is a creek entering into Lake Mendota."

THANKS a lot Ralph for the comments. I certainly need all the information I can get from those of you who have lived on the shores of the lake for half a century or more. Such information made from first-hand observations is always extremely valuable in helping our young folks to realize how nice the old lake used to be.

I can now speak with more authority Ralph than I could have a few months ago. I have learned plenty about the watershed in around Madison since I sold out my sporting goods business and have been in the real estate business.

I cannot understand just why our engineers do not seem to make one decent effort to really control erosion when they go about platting a piece of property or laying out roads and highways. It is ridiculous when engineers are supposed to know their stuff about the evils of soil erosion. I have my doubts now. They either know and do not care a whoop or they just haven't grasped what erosion really is and means to a community's well-being.

I have looked over the Hill Farm section and brother there is going to be a problem there that will effect the old lake as well as the rest of us who live in the city and the surrounding area. There will be a terrific watershed and it will all end up in Lake Mendota.

I haven't any more room today but will take up the west end and east end watershed next. Please send in any comments and ideas that you may have. You might have the idea.

Read the Want Ads for Profit!

sandy



Storm sewer runoff enters Spring Harbor  
and Lake Mendota following a July  
thunderstorm in 1993

Skot Weidemann photo

